Acting Bodies.

The Role of Gestures in German Drama, Film, and Performance.

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
under the Executive Committee
of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2021

Abstract

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The dissertation undertakes an extensive investigation of the role of the gesture – from Lessing to emoji. Through close readings of bodily gestures as inscribed in text, documented on film, employed in performance, and shared throughout the cyberspace, the dissertation demonstrates how the human body has been imagined, conceptualized, and disciplined at various points since the second half of the 18th century. Presenting a reading of the body through the lens of different media, the analyses bring forth moments of disidentification and friction between medium and body: be that in gestural disobedience to ordered stage instructions, in resistance to the demands of the filmic apparatus, or in the form of a non-white emoji. To extrapolate historical developments and also processes of quotation and transference across media, material from different periods and disciplines is assembled: from unpublished manuscripts of the early Enlightenment (G. E. Lessing) via filmic footage from the late Weimar period (G. W. Pabst), to post-dramatic theatre performances around 2000 (Chr. Schlingensief), all the way up to present day exchanges on social media platforms.

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Dedication

To Gabi Schweiger, Lucia Schweiger, and Ursi Schweiger. To Martin Leopoldseder, Gustav Schweiger, and Simon Schoch. To my teachers, my peers, and my students.

Introduction

"Die Furcht hat ihren besonderen Sinn, meine Tochter! – Ich werde es nie vergessen, mit welcher Geberde du hereinstürztest."[1]

These are the words with which, in 1772, Emilia Galotti is introduced to the stage. Emilia's initial act is to *crash* into a drama already bearing her name. After relentless and futile attempts to cite her to the stage and with the name "Emilia" echoing through the play, she arrives, eventually: too late, but in person, her entire body wrapped up in affect and action, expressing a distinct "Geberde," as her mother calls it, a gesture ready to be read. The relevance of reading, understanding, and "never forget[ting]" Emilia's gestures is highlighted at the very beginning. Emilia's mother, Claudia Galotti, is the play's most capable semiotician and interpreter of words and language. But she is also an observer who understands— and urges us to read—Emilia's gestures. Claudia's attention to words and gestures is, in fact, that of the writer himself, and her description of Emilia's gesture just another version of the stage instructions Lessing had added—sparsely, but with the utmost precision—to the play: "EMILIA *stürzet in einer ängstlichen Verwirrung herein*."[2]

The connotation of one particular affect ("einer ängstlichen Verwirrung"), with a specific gesture ("stürzet") is notated in the stage directions and reiterated, in variation, by Emilia's first interlocutor. At first glance, this perfect congruence between instruction and interpretation seems

[1] Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Emilia Galotti. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 7 WERKE 1770 – 1773.* Edited by Klaus Bohnen. Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003, p. 317.
[2] Ibd., p. 314.

to hold the promise that Emilia's "Geberde[n]" are unambiguous. However, the opposite will turn out to be the case. Emilia's choreography is all but consistent—it is, in fact, highly ambiguous and hard to decipher, even to herself. Emilia's initial gesture of falling, crashing, breaking into the room is already two things at once: a "Geberde," a gesture, but also and at the very same time, the perfect absence of all gestural control. Studied more closely, this tension between gestural awareness—the control over one's body and the signals it sends—and the immediate loss or absence of that very control defines Emilia's body and its movements, and it extends to Emilia's own perception of her body. This is relevant, as the tension in Emilia's gestures simultaneously highlights the tension of Enlightenment theatre itself: the imperative to the actors to act naturally and as though unobserved but simultaneously according to detailed and precise stage directions, with deliberation and control, meaningfully, and aptly. Emilia's gestures, in short, lead us to the very dispositif of which her body is conceived as part. Her gestures are defined by and simultaneously revolt against the theatrical parameters of her time.

This is where my interest originates. Enlightenment theatre and its stage directions are but one example: in any given medium, bodies, subtly and silently, develop their own plots and these gestural plots are significant. Gestures can act as powerful allies, dubious modifiers, or even chief opponents to the messages as they are found in books, films, or even a brief tweet. Quite obviously, films and tweets vary greatly, and different media environments provide additional options for gestural activity. This, precisely, is the starting point for my particular investigations: my dissertation seeks to find out how specific media settings shape the preconditions for gestures to come into being. Studying the different contexts in which gestures occur—apart from

Enlightenment theatre I chose to look at silent film, post-dramatic performance, and social media platforms—allows me to uncover the conditions of possibility for gestural expression.

My analysis hinges, firstly, on an unmetaphorical approach to its subject matter, the gesture. When I speak of gestures, like Claudia Galotti, I mean postures and movements of the body or its parts: "Gebärden,"[3] bodily intonations and articulations, both intentional and unintentional, usually involving hands, feet, fingers, muscles of the face, vocal organs and various other visible and invisible parts of the body. This definition is simultaneously broad and specific, and it enables me to treat gestures as mediated phenomena that point to all matters bodily. Such a phenomenological definition of the gesture is intricately linked to the question of material and materiality. It allows me to treat bodies *in actu* as meaningful sites of production, even if—or especially as—for the most part, such production processes do not result in an externalized product[4] other than the particular body itself. The analyses will show that what the gesture produces is, essentially, the body itself. I will show that observing a body *in actu* and in exchange with its

[3] The German language allows for a distinction between gestures and "Gebärden," and in some disciplines, such as art history, some scholars distinguish between the two: while "Gebärden" are negotiable and ask for interpretation, the meaning of "gestures" is fixed and requires recognition rather than interpretation: "Die Ausdeutung von Gebärden durch den Empfänger läßt sich von seiten des Senders in einem hohen Maße bestreiten (Negozibilität). Gesten hingegen besitzen eine festgesetzte, quasi lexikalische Bedeutung, deren Kenntnis der Sender bei seinem Adressaten voraussetzt. Gesten werden also im Gegensatz zu Gebärden nicht ausgedeutet, sondern als Bedeutungsträger wiedererkannt." (138) – While the distinction between conventionalized and non-conventionalized gestures will be important in my analysis, I aim to show that a strict separation cannot be upheld. The focus, rather, will be on their indistinguishability and processes of conventionalization; the transition from "Gebärde" to "gesture." Cf. Mrass, Marcus. *Gesten und Gebärden: Begriffsbestimmungen und -verwendung in Hinblick auf kunsthistorische Untersuchungen.* Schnell + Steiner, 2005.

[4] There are ambiguous cases and sometimes, a gesture does produce something external to the body. I would argue that Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection delivers helpful tools when talking about such "externalized" products gestures might, at times, produce. The focus, however, will be on the production of corporeality rather than bodily abjects. Cf. Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection.* Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. Columbia University Press, 1982.

immediate environment means observing an act of production and, simultaneously, a process of becoming.[5]

To better understand the implications of choosing this particular approach and how this connects to the method, a brief excursus into theory is necessary. Before recent turns, gestures have mainly been understood metaphorically, and metaphoric "gestures" differ in kind from the ones I want to prioritize. Approaches have changed, particularly over the past thirty years and since 1991, when Vilèm Flusser made an attempt at reviving the phenomenology of gestures and bemoaned "daß wir über keine Theorie der Interpretation von Gesten verfügen."[6] Building on the phenomenological approach and, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's close observation of gestures and bodily movement,[7] various strands of performance studies started to focus on the analysis of "actual" gestures.

Christoph Wulf and Erika Fischer-Lichte highlight in their compendium, *Gesten*, published in 2010, how central the study of gestures has become to analyze performance.[8] Realizing gestures not merely as deliverer or modifier of meaning, the authors also explicitly point to the productive power of gestures, their ability to create rather than just represent: "In Gesten werden Emotionen und Denkprozesse her- und dargestellt."[9] Several publications and projects emerging in the wake of

[5] This is connected to Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of "becoming" body and "making yourself a body" – both the processual and the auto-productive elements are present in the notion of gesture I am applying. Cf. Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. "6 November 28, 1947: How Do You Make Yourself A Body Without Organs?" *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Translation and foreword by Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, 2005, pp. 149–166.
[6] Flusser, Vilém. *Gesten. Versuch einer Phänomenologie.* Bollmann, 1991.
[7] Cf. in particular part one, "The Body," and the passages on the gesture of "Zeigen" and the movement of "Greifen" (123ff) in Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception.* Translated by Colin Smith. Routledge; Kegan & Paul, 1962.
[8] Fischer-Lichte, Erika and Christoph Wulf, editors. *Gesten. Inszenierung. Aufführung.* Praxis. Fink, 2010.
[9] Ibd., p. 9.

these studies demonstrate the continued interest in the study of gesture and its "philosophy;"[10] some scholars proclaim a current and ongoing "coming of age of [...] gesture studies."[11] These debates also prove that the interest in bodily gestures is not limited to humanities or language studies. Particularly the observation that gestures do not merely represent but also produce thought and emotion corresponds with the findings of interdisciplinary scholarship and experimental studies within the natural sciences. Neurology, kinesthetics, and embodied cognition have started prioritizing the analysis of gestural movement and its relationship to the body and the brain, providing, in turn, linguistics and the humanities with new input.[12]

Finally, the interest in "the gestural" has extended to its scholarship. In 2020, the ambitious book project *Gestische Forschung*[13] was launched. It may be seen as indicative of a more general trend in academia. The emphasis on "gestural" processes rather than "gestures" or even their meaning ("nicht die Bedeutung von Gesten, sondern Gestisches als Vorgang und Prozess, als Disposition und Haltung")[14] forms the basis for the programmatic reuniting of metaphorical and unmetaphorical approaches. While "actual" gestures remain the subject matter of the collection of essays at hand, the contributors to *Gestische Forschung*, all coming from a variety of fields, are, as the programmatic foreword announces, encouraged to let the various gestures they write about inform their reflections and their style and mode of writing, respectively. Working with gestures, the

[10] Cf. for example Darian, Veronika, editor. *Verhaltene Beredsamkeit? – Politik, Pathos und Philosophie der Geste.* Peter Lang, 2009.
[11] Goldin-Meadow, Susan and Diane Brentari. "Gesture, Sign, and Language: The Coming of Age of Sign Language and Gesture Studies." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 40. Cambridge University Press, 2017, DOI: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/behavioral-and-brain-sciences/article/gesture-sign-and-language-the-coming-of-age-of-sign-language-and-gesture-studies/40B9B8E3C35C7005D4D588EC39E34C80.
[12] For an application of Merlau-Ponty's concept of "intercorporeality" within social and psychological sciences cf. Meyer Christian (et. al.), editors. *Intercorporeality: Emerging Socialities in Interaction.* Oxford University Press, 2017.
[13] Darian, Veronika and Peer de Smit, editors. *Gestische Forschung. Praktiken und Perspektiven.* Neofelis, 2020.
[14] Ibd., p. 9.

editors argue, requires scholars to reflect their own position[15] in the field. Research thus is successful if it is "gestural": "indem sie nicht nur nach den Bedingungen der Möglichkeit des Forschens [...] fragen, sondern auch nach der [...] Haltung der Forschenden selbst."[16]

My analyses of gestures originate and continue in the tradition of the "unmetaphorical approach," and I will use the phenomenological perspective and performance studies' genuine interest in the body as meaningful point of departure—yet not as my exclusive field of study or the only aspect to consider. This dissertation is a study of gestures *and* its contexts; of contexts *and* their gestures. In my four analyses I will present readings of bodily, productive processes that happen "in between" certain contextual constellations. All of the constellations involve productive, gesturing bodies, yet the respective "in-betweens" of the gestural incidences thus emerging differ in kind. The analyses assembled here thus present an *inter*-medial focus, while they treat the gesture as *trans*-medial phenomenon.[17] I aim to show that gestures occur in various medial context, but that, despite their affinity to bodily materialities, they do not have a clearly defined or definable medium of origin: they are not, or not necessarily, "the body's." Like Emilia's, I will present gestures as phenomena that are always entangled and interwoven with their contexts. I seek to approach them as both—as bodily in essence *and* as utterly media-specific.

I also want to highlight two additional aspects that may distinguish mine from the studies on gesture(s) laid out in past and current scholarship. Firstly, I do not merely focus on the

[15] The word in German is "Haltung" which can be understood two ways, as "posture" or "position" but also as "attitude."
[16] Darian, *Gestische Forschung*, p. 9f.
[17] I use Rajewsky's terminology here, including the distinction she makes between intermediality and transmediality. Cf. Rajewsky, Irina. *Intermedialität.* A. Francke, 2002.

"products" gestures generate (affects, or thoughts, to pick up Wulf's and Fischer-Lichte's examples), or, related to that, their "meaning." Rather, I also seek to study gestures' auto-productive effects and lay out how they partake in creating their own materiality. This requires a consideration of the precondition of such productive acts. Thus, what the gestural body represents or "means" in a specific environment, is essential, yet secondary. My analyses will aim to shed light on the question why certain gestures emerge in and out of a media environment, but not others. Prioritizing the conditions of possibility a specific medium provides for gestures—and with that: bodies—to come into being, also aids in locating particular mechanisms of exclusion at work. This will contribute to a better understanding as to why certain bodies come into being (and representation), but not others.

Secondly, and in relation to that, my analyses will show that practices of exclusion are not always solely executed by an external medium or the setting in which bodily gestures are found but, at times, the gesturing body itself. Particularly in performance studies, the gesture is often seen as a body's act of liberation, as an expressive force that allows the body to defy hegemonic discourse practices—that, in short, the gesture holds the potential of introducing a "critical practice."[18] The left's faith in the critical potential of the gesture can, in part, be traced back to the theory of "Gestus,"[19] as coined by Brecht, and writings continuing in the same vein, for example by

[18] Cf. Butler, Judith. "When Gesture Becomes Event." Plenary Lecture at Sorbonne University on June 27 2014, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuAMRxSH-s.

[19] Brecht's definition of the "Gestus" is complicated and cannot be done justice in a single footnote. The definitions of "Gestus" Brecht himself offers are diverse, and often point to the interconnectedness of an individual's (bodily, gestural) behavior and the society she responds to: "Ein Gestus bezeichnet die Beziehung von Menschen zueinander." (BDS, 92). While Brecht also acknowledges that some "Gestus" are not necessarily societal or political, but can be personal, his interest gravitates towards "Gestus" as political term and the question of how, by studying gestures among other things, politics are and can be revealed as physically effective system. Brecht, Bertolt. *Über den Beruf des Schauspielers.* Suhrkamp, 1970.

Benjamin[20] and Barthes[21] (—or, in variation, by Adorno[22]). Without wanting to lose the hope in gestures' critical potential, however, I find it essential not to turn a blind eye to the violence gestures themselves can exert and to consider incidents of gestures creating exclusive corporealities and spaces of exclusion. Gestures, too, can become—and have become—proponents and perpetrators of hegemonic discourse.[23]

The four chapters and the analyses of the preconditions for the gestural activity they contain are comparative, but not successive; there is, despite the chronological order in which the cases are presented, no development or "history" of gestures to be extracted—except, of course, the chronology inherent in the succession of media. I aim to shed light on how gestures work, how gestures and bodies are necessarily shaped by their frameworks—and how bodies emerging from such productive processes collide or conform with the discourses on corporeality of their time. This will also show how gestures and gesturing bodies, in turn, demand space and may cause a particular medium to develop or evolve. Focusing on different aspects of gestural activity, the case

[20] In reference to Brecht, Benjamin develops a notion of the gesture as an element of disruption, highlighting its productive and critical potential. He also works towards a demetaphorization of the term: to him, "gestural" means physically active and productive. Cf. Benjamin, Walter. "Was ist das epische Theater? Eine Studie zu Brecht." *Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. II.2: Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge.* Suhrkamp, 1989, pp. 519–531.

[21] Maybe the title of his text already reveals that Barthes' "method" of juxtaposing different media comes closest to my own. In reference to Lessing and Brecht, Barthes develops a notion of the "Gestus" as "tak[ing] up the idea of the pregnant moment." (73) He also scrutinizes the terminology and asks: "Is it a gesture or a set of gestures (but never a gesticulation) in which a whole social situation can be read. [sic]" (73f) Cf. Barthes, Roland. "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein." *Image, Music, Text.* Selected and translated by Stephen Heath. Fontana Press, 1977, pp. 69–78.

[22] In his critique of Brecht, Adorno famously turns Brecht's own terminology against him: "Sein [Brechts] didaktischer Gestus [...] ist intolerant gegen die Mehrdeutigkeit, an der Denken sich entzündet: er ist autoritär." Adorno, Theodor W.. *Ästhetische Theorie. Gesammelte Schriften in 20 Bänden*, Bd. 7. Suhrkamp, 2020, p. 360.

[23] Past and current developments and the appropriation of gestural codes by the far- and alt-right, as well as the continued expansion of the gestural repertoire with problematic connotations are reason to remain alert to gestures' many functions and the range of applicability. For a fairly recent example of gestural appropriation and re-signification, cf. for instance Allyn, Bobby. "The 'OK' Hand Gesture Is Now Listed As A Symbol Of Hate." *NPR*, September 26 2019, URL: https://www.npr.org/2019/09/26/764728163/the-ok-hand-gesture-is-now-listed-as-a-symbol-of-hate?t=1616703294662.

studies show that gestures can have different purposes and functions. They lead to different results, and their "success" or the effects they exert vary greatly. Finally, it will become clear how different gestures, emerging out of different contexts, result in fundamentally different bodies. This will help me scrutinize the idea of "the body" as an ontological constant or entity that is merely exposed to and shaped by different settings.

The first chapter centers around aforementioned author and dramaturge G. E. Lessing. Many of the author's programmatic texts on acting, movement, gestures, and the body on stage have been, also due to their unwieldy format, primarily neglected by scholarship. I show that understanding Lessing's involvement in discussing bodily eloquence and acting in the second half of the 18th century is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of his plays. Lessing wrote technical sketches and drafts on acting and gestures mainly at the beginning of his career, yet, brought into conversation with the canonized texts he wrote later on—including his very last bourgeois tragedy, *Emilia Galotti*—these early drafts reveal their relevance. Focusing mainly on the peritextual parts of the drama, the stage instructions, my analysis offers a new perspective on the text's conceptual framework and structure and reveals it as essentially choreographic. An analysis of the continuities and breaks in Lessing's conceptualization of the body on stage, I argue, aids in an understanding of why the choreographic and gestural elements are so central to Lessing's dramatic literature. Finally, this will help me to reveal Emilia's precise choreography as a direct comment on the discourse on corporeality and (female) acting at the time.

The second chapter centers around the role of gestures in silent films. Unsurprisingly, the silent film genre was immensely prolific in the development of gestural vocabulary, as the medium essentially depends on body language. Quite obviously, gestures were often required to convey

most or significant parts of the narratives. My investigations, however, focus on the less obvious elements of gestural communication in late silent and early sound films. An analysis of three co-productions between director/writer G. W. Pabst and dancer/actress Louise Brooks uncovers how, in the years of Weimar cinema's transition from silent to sound film, actresses' gestures were continuously subordinated to the demands of the filmic apparatus, and, by extension, the male gaze. Tracing the subtle changes in Louise Brooks' gestural repertoire throughout the three successive films allows me to discover meaning outside of the films' narrative plots. I argue that the gestural disciplining of Brooks' movements throughout the three films stands in stark contrast to the (at times emancipatory) narratives the films claim to tell. Prioritizing an aesthetic-visual analysis and focusing on the gestural rather than the narrative plots sheds light on the effects film and its transition to sound had on the acting body.

The third chapter introduces artist Christoph Schlingensief and his performance *Please Love Austria* from 2000. In this particular performance, the bodies' gestures, on the surface, do not play much of a role at all: to the observer, the—"foreign"—bodies on site were merely present. Instead of expressive and external bodily gestures, however, the performance participants employed subtle linguistic gestures that, I argue, can be identified as the actual bearers of meaning. Whenever any of the performance's participants spoke, vocal and dialectal intonation enhanced, modified, or ridiculed the actual message. The performance exemplifies how gestures as benign as pronunciations can serve as the message itself. The analyses in this chapter highlight how gestures can in themselves create, adopt, or reinforce mechanisms of exclusions, as certain linguistic gestures (the High German standard, for instance) are read as superior to others (the non-Western foreign accent of a German-learner, for example). Scrutinizing the myth of the gesture as

necessarily liberating or emancipatory force, a comparison of Schlingensief's employment of his own body and its set of linguistic gestures, and the linguistic gestures of the other—differently "foreign"—participants involved in the performance, reveals that the performance did not shy away from exploiting the very measures of exclusion it claimed to criticize.

The fourth and final chapter studies gestural elements in present-day communication, mainly digital messaging services and social media. Through a recapitulation of the history of emoji, I show how these comparably new elements in our digital exchange continue and relate to a long-standing tradition of incorporating gesture and bodily, affective expression into text. I further demonstrate how these gestural elements in the text have always been subject to standardization and exclusion. My analysis of the "Black Twitter" movement and the evolution of the non-white emoji which, among other developments, resulted from the *Black Lives Matter* protests on the streets, extrapolates the fact that gestural vocabulary to this day is contested terrain; it is not separate or separable from struggles for accurate and equal representation. The focus on the development and gradual diversification of emoji vocabulary further highlights the necessity to study the preconditions of expression in any given medium. By investigating the conditions required for bodies to make themselves heard—in this instance, on social media—the final chapter zooms in on the co-constitutive relationship between bodies and their media environment.

Chapter I: Writing Gestures

> [...] the author cannot predict tmesis: he [sic] cannot choose to write *what will not be read*. And yet, it is the very rhythm of what is read and what is not read that creates the pleasure of the great narratives [...][24]
>
> (Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text)*

"[W]hat will not be read"—Drama's Cursive Peritext

What is the benefit, one could ask, of reading "Regieanweisungen," stage instructions: text that was in some way intended *not to be read*, or, more precisely, read just by some, but not by others? Is it legitimate to criticize and analyze text whose existence as text is meant to be merely intermediary—an instruction, for instance, demanding instantaneous execution rather than intensive tmesis? What, indeed, is the benefit of devoting a chapter to gestures in text—only to then focus on some silent instructions, whose status as "text" is all but easy to defend?

There is, I argue, something stage instructions can tell us about Enlightenment theatre that other texts and other types of text cannot. Within the dramatic genre, text fulfills a variety of roles. It provides information, it lists, it documents, it instructs, it dictates what it wants to be spoken on stage, and how. Consequentially, the dramatic script is a conglomerate of different text functions, not all of them "literary" in the narrower sense. A distinction between texts and *paratexts*,[25] as suggested by Gérard Genette, allows us to analyze literature as compounds that combine different

[24] Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text.* Translated by Richard Miller. With a Note on the Text by Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, 1975, p. 11.
[25] Genette, Gérard. *Paratexts – Thresholds of Interpretation.* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

text types with various degrees of literariness. I suggest that Genette's analytic framework, though developed as tool for narratological analysis and primarily by reference to prose literature, is helpful when it comes to Enlightenment theatre and its dramatic genres. First, because the theatre of the time explicitly presented itself as literary, as "literarisiert,"[26]—which automatically raises the question of the exact whereabouts of these texts' literariness as well as the status of its less literary components. Secondly, and related to that, the dramatic literature of the eighteenth century starts to incorporate narrative elements and descriptive narrations to their dramatic dialogues—and often, these narrations relate to the acting body, its gestures, its affects. Excessively long or detailed stage instructions—at times, bordering on pantomimic theatre or *tableaux*—are indicative for one tendency of Enlightenment theatre: the blurring of boundaries between narrative and dramatic literature, along with the emergence of the "Lesedrama."[27]

I will not, primarily, focus on such "reading dramas" or closet plays. Instead, I will be looking at dramas that make use of stage instructions as paratextual elements. I will investigate what happens if stage instructions are deliberately employed as inner-textual *thresholds* or *seuils*[28] and how they at times—silently—reorganize a scene. In that, I will pay particular attention to their placement. To stay within the Genettian paradigm, in which they are, as I said, absent, stage instructions would have to be classified as "peritexts"—paratexts that are, in a spatial sense, to be found within the literary text itself.[29] This spatiality of stage directions *in between* is, as we will see,

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[26] For an analysis of theatre's "literarization" in the Enlightenment cf. for instance Deiters, Franz-Josef. "Von Gottscheds Literarisierung des Theaters zu Tiecks literarischem Post-Theater – eine mediologische Reflexion." *Groteske Moderne – moderne Groteske: Festschrift für Philip Thomson.* Edited by Franz-Josef Deiters, Axel Fliethmann, Christiane Weller. Rohrig Universitätsverlag, 2011, pp. 407-430. (Transpositionen; Band 3)

[27] Cf. Marx, Peter W. "Regieanweisung/Szenenanweisung." *Handbuch Drama. Theorie, Analyse, Geschichte.* Metzler, 2012, pp. 144-146, p. 145.

[28] Cf. Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 2 and ctd.; as well as the original title of the text in French, *Seuils*.

[29] Genette's examples for typial peritexts are covers, (chapter) titles, prefaces, intertitles and notes. Cf. Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 5.

essential. Usually, stage instructions are either placed after a character's name, and "before" they speak, or "while" they speak, for example as modifier of a particular part of their speech. Their position *in between* and their disruptive, "cursif," nature are, I argue, part of their motive and function. While they, just like the dialogues, are expressed in language and entirely dependent on the linearity language dictates, their position and their form—they are often elliptical and composed in agrammatical structures—disrupt the character speech and challenge the linearity of the text. This is particularly the case when the instructions contain the description of gestures or movement.

Within dramatic literature, the clear and visually supported distinction between instruction—put in brackets and/or cursive font—and text proper is, first of all, pragmatic, rooted in convention and fulfills a rather obvious task: to distinguishes that which will be spoken and may be received "directly" by the audience from that which is secondary, purely informative or instructive information for the reader or the actor, or, in some cases, the personnel behind the scenes. A strict and clear distinction between these two realms is certainly historically contingent and has, especially in more recent times and as part of various turns of the theatrical paradigm, been permeated and, in some cases, completely abolished.[30] In the rather prolific phase of eighteenth century and its production of theatre literature, however, it is, unlike many other dyadic theatrical structures famously beginning to crumble, intact and even treated as necessity. Certain affective and physical reactions such as crying were added to the scripts to highlight and intensify the bodily or gestural effects of spoken words.[31] Stage instructions were the writer's way of

[30] Cf. for instance Peter Handke's or Heiner Müller's attempts to write plays consisting of stage instructions exclusively. Handke, Peter. *Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wußten. Ein Schauspiel.* Suhrkamp, 1992./ Müller, Heiner. *Bildbeschreibung. Ende der Vorstellung.* Edited by Ulrike Haß. Breyeten, 2005. (Theater der Zeit; Recherchen 29)
[31] Cf. Marx, Peter W. "Regieanweisung/Szenenanweisung," p. 145.

reaching out to the prospective actors and their bodies, and of directing them, even when they themselves were physically absent.

This explains why there is such an obvious affinity between acting theories and stage instructions. Both text forms are symptomatic for the professionalization of the art of acting and dramatic author's role within that development. Many dramatic authors of the eighteenth century wrote theories on acting and I will show that these stand in direct relation to their play's stage instructions. Historically, stage instructions—particularly those that contain gestural, choreographic or modal instructions for the delivery of the text—are indicative for Western acting's development out of the art form of rhetoric. While the eighteenth century's art of acting worked hard to rid itself of this heritage and aimed for naturalness,[32] some residues of the old discipline persisted. One might argue that, essentially, any stage instruction echoes the idea that there is an *apt* way of saying, acting, doing and delivering the word—that there is such a thing as "actio" proper. The question then is whether the idea of correct or appropriate bodily expression enhances or interferes with the proclaimed project of intellectual emancipation so often in the center of Enlightenment of drama and literature. Should not any "sapere aude!" go hand in hand with a "movere aude!"—and any actor's freedom of bodily expression? Or is it, in fact, quite the opposite and are mode, pace and foot position of any liberating "Ausgang"[33] choreographed and pre-scribed meticulously?

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[32] Cf. for instance Cf. Heeg, Günter: *Das Phantasma der natürlichen Gestalt. Körper, Sprache und Bild im Theater des 18. Jahrhunderts.* Stromfeld Verlag, 2000.
[33] Cf. Kant, Immanuel. "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? " *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 4, 1784.

To tackle some of these questions, I will examine G. E. Lessing's theories on acting as well as his employment of stage instructions and other gestural-choreographic elements in his dramas. A close reading of the last bourgeois tragedy he wrote, *Emilia Galotti*, will help us to realize the role and importance of stage instructions and notated gestures for a comprehensive analysis of the play. Reading *Emilia Galotti* as a piece of essentially choreographic literature allows us to relate single gestures—such as Emilia's "turn" at a pivotal point in the drama—not only to the other movement imperatives in the play, but to understand Emilia's gestures—and with that, the play—as a comment on the discourse on the theatrical dispositif and particularly female acting at the time. *Emilia Galotti*, I will argue, is also a reflection on the demands any theatrical stage imposes on the acting body; the text is dramatic literature that, with the help of stage instructions, confronts Enlightenment theatre and its paradoxical demands. By analyzing Lessing's peri- and paratexts, including drafts, doodles and sketches he wrote throughout his career, I will show how the utterly well-known plot of the author's last bourgeois tragedy is, to a large degree, dependent on—and called into question by—the heroine's specific repertoire of gestures.

Lessing's Paratexts and Theories of Immediacy: "Schauspieler" *In-Between*

Approaching Lessing's œuvre with a focus on the paratext is not per se revolutionary or new. While in other cases such an approach may require justification, it has repeatedly proven useful when it comes to the texts of G.E. Lessing. The author is famous for using titles and subtitles creatively, and for bending the truth when it comes to presenting the presumably factual data at the beginning of a play. One might recall his calculated re-dating of *Minna von Barnhelm* for artistic emphasis and political purpose,[34] or his deliberate (mis)use of genre descriptions to belie audience expectations.[35] Not to mention the relevance of an entire archive of non-literary or not-quite-literary writing Lessing produced over the years, for example in the form of countless letters in which public and private correspondences intertwine. While most of these documents have been subject to scholarship, some para- and peritexts have to this day been largely neglected. Especially Lessing's thoughts on gestures and stage instructions, or his early drafts on acting, including instructive sketches, have received little to no attention.

Lessing is frequently described as a "man of the theatre," as someone who, from earliest age on, had been drawn to the stage—or, more precisely, to the back of the stage.[36] To this day, some

[34] To emphasize the play's connection to the Seven Years' War, Lessing published the text, written in 1767, with the explicit lie: "verfertiget im Jahre 1763," the year the war ended, and in which the play is set. Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm oder das Soldatenglück. Ein Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen verfertiget im Jahre 1763. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 6 WERKE 1767 – 1769.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.

[35] Lessing's early play *Die Juden* ("The Jews"), for example, was announced as "Lustspiel" ("comedy") which made people expect a play in which Jews were to be laughed down. (According to the genre conventions, the titles of comedies should indicate who or what was going to be ridiculed.) In fact, Lessing's play works against stereotypization and prejudice; the unnamed hero of the play turns out to be Jewish himself; the joke is on reader and audience. Cf. Lessing, *Die Juden. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 1 WERKE 1743 – 1750.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.

[36] Cf. for instance Hildebrandt, Dieter. *Lessing. Biographie einer Emanzipation.* Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979.

view him as the first dramaturge there ever was.[37] Certainly, his keen interest in performance and the effect his and other plays had on the audience is well documented. Lessing's detailed observation of the affects theatre generates, including his thoughts on fear and compassion,[38] are read as precursors for performance and affect theories, and to this day are firmly anchored in the canons of theatre literature and its theory. In that context, it is particularly surprising that Lessing's comments on stage instructions are rarely mentioned or subject to analysis—especially since they are to be found in the same book, the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, and that these passages pertain the very same questions: what does theatre do, and how are affect, meaning and processes of signification communicated on stage?

Similar as to how he builds his argument about fear and compassion, Lessing's thoughts on the necessity of stage instructions are based in historical investigations and thorough reviews of ancient theatre literature. The seventy-first piece of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* for example, is a detailed analysis of a play by ancient poet Terence. Lessing's review quickly leads him to more general observation regarding ancient theatre literature, and the difficulties their particular form poses to any contemporary reader:

> Nur ist öfters, um hinter alle Feinheiten des Terenz zu kommen, die Gabe sehr nötig, sich das Spiel des Akteurs dabei zu denken; denn dieses schrieben die alten Dichter nicht bei. Die Deklamation hatte ihren eignen Künstler, und in dem übrigen konnten sie sich ohne Zweifel auf die Einsicht der Spieler verlassen, die aus ihrem Geschäfte ein sehr ernstliches

[37] A profession, of course, that had not really existed in his time. Cf. a recent article by Simon Strauss on the "state of the dramaturge," in which he names Lessing as the first dramaturge in the history of theatre. Strauss, Simon. "Wer soll euch denn noch entzünden?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 6 2017, DOI: http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buehne-und-konzert/zur-lage-des-dramaturgen-wer-soll-euch-denn-noch-entzuenden-15002033.html. (March 31 2021)

[38] Lessing lays out the interaction between text-body and affect-body in his reflections on "Mitleid und Furcht," sometimes also translated as "pity and fear," and their respective functions for the experience of tragic action Cf. Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*..

> Studium machten. Nicht selten befanden sich unter diesen die Dichter selbst; sie sagten, wie sie es haben wollten; und da sie ihre Stücke überhaupt nicht eher bekannt werden ließen, als bis sie gespielt waren, als bis man sie gesehen und gehört hatte: so konnten sie es um so mehr überhoben sein, den geschriebenen Dialog durch Einschiebsel zu unterbrechen, in welchen sich der beschreibende Dichter gewissermaßen mit unter die handelnden Personen zu mischen scheinet. Wenn man sich aber einbildet, daß die alten Dichter, um sich diese Einschiebsel zu ersparen, in den Reden selbst, jede Bewegung, jede Gebärde, jede Miene, jede besondere Abänderung der Stimme, die dabei zu beobachten, mit anzudeuten gesucht: so irret man sich. In dem Terenz allein kommen unzählige Stellen vor, in welchen von einer solchen Andeutung sich nicht die geringste Spur zeiget, und wo gleichwohl der wahre Verstand nur durch die Erratung der wahren Aktion kann getroffen werden; ja in vielen scheinen die Worte gerade das Gegenteil von dem zu sagen, was der Schauspieler durch jene ausdrücken muß. (*HD*, LXXI)[39]

Lessing here takes a stand for the importance of thinking in sensually produced, in performative, rather than literal meaning. His observations lead him to conclude that, more often than not, the words by themselves are not too helpful when trying to interpret a scene. He notices that, in fact, character speech often seems to stand in perfect opposition to what the scene seems to try to express. In the absence of both the author and the author's stage instructions, the reader is left

[39] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 71st piece, p. 539.
Translation:
"Yet to get behind all of Terence's subtleties, we require the gift of imagining the actor's playing, for the old poets did not include it. Declamation had its own artists, and for the rest they could doubtless depend on the insight of the players, who made a very serious study of their business. Not infrequently the poets themselves were among the players; they said how they wanted it played. And because they generally did not let their plays circulate before they had been performed, before people had seen and heard them, they could all the more easily avoid interrupting the written dialogue with insertions in which the descriptive poet seems in some way to mix in among the characters. If one imagines, however, that in order to spare themselves these insertions, the old poets tried to indicate in the speeches themselves every movement, every gesture, every facial expression, and every particular change in the voice to be observed with each speech, then one will be mistaken. In Terence alone countless passages occur in which there is not the least trace of such an indication and where nevertheless the true understanding can only be met through guessing the true action; indeed, in many places the words seem to say precisely the opposite of what the actor must express through them." (*Hamburg Dramaturgy: A New and Complete Translation:* http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/)

dependent on their own speculation, on "Erratung," on guessing the intended meaning, "de[n] wahren Verstand." If there are no mimic or gestural markers inserted into the text, his conclusion implies, the meaning is dependent on the presence of the author; as long as they are "among the actors" the written play is free to emerge, structurally as well as temporally, out of the action of play*ing,* gestures included. The dramatic script, in that case, is merely the documentation of a collective rehearsal process and mimics, inflection or gestures are "given" without need for textual documentation.

While the fascination for such dynamic processes of production is certainly palpable, Lessing, evidently, conceptualized his work differently. Keenly aware of the importance of gestures, he made sure to include them and add them with precision to the dramatic script. For Lessing and his contemporaries, the script was no longer thought of as documentation of a result of former, collective processes, but every gesture, in text and performance, was to be conducted and *vorgesehen:*[40] gestures had to be translated—"before-hand"—into text. After all, and as Lessing explicitly states, when it comes to the theatre, "[n]on quid dicatur, sed quo gestu dicatur, specta"[41]—not the word, but the gesturing, expressive body is, what becomes visible on stage. In this regard, stage instructions—textually defined imperatives as to how exactly the words are expected to

[40] Regarding Lessing's concept of "Vorsicht" or imagination and destiny cf. for instance Reh, Albert. "'Emilia Galotti' – 'grosses Exempel der dramatischen Algebra' oder 'Algebra der Ambivalenz?'" *Lessing Yearbook*, Vol. 17, Wayne State University Press, 1985. DOI: http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1293625923?accountid=10226.

[41] The entire quote reads: "Doch da er über die Wallungen seines kochenden Geblüts nicht so unmittelbar gebieten kann, da der Zorn, der überführen will, doch noch immer Zorn bleibt, so macht Donatus die zweite Anmerkung: Non quid dicatur, sed quo gestu dicatur, specta: et videbis neque adhuc repressisse iracundiam, neque ad se rediisse Demeam. Demea sagte zwar: 'Ich mäßige mich, ich bin wieder bei mir': aber Gesicht und Gebärde und Stimme verraten genugsam, daß er sich noch nicht gemäßiget hat, daß er noch nicht wieder bei sich ist."/ Translation: "Yet because he cannot immediately govern the surging of his boiling blood, because the anger that wants to convince is still nothing other than anger, Donatus makes his second comment: '*non quid dicatur, sed quo gestu dicatur, specta; & videbis neque adhuc repressisse iracundiam, neque ad se rediisse Demeam*'. Demea does indeed say, 'I am controlling myself, I am myself again;' but face and gesture and voice sufficiently betray that he is not yet himself again." (*HD*, LXXI); (*Hamburg Dramaturgy: A New and Complete Translation:* http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/)

be put in motion by the acting body—are not only the author's way of eliminating ambiguity and of claiming authority over textual interpretation. They are, in fact, a way to make one's own as well the actors' body exchangeable, and, to a degree, dispensable.[42]

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While a theoretical interest in acting was, at that time and when acting was just establishing itself as independent profession and art form,[43] all but uncommon, Lessing's particular approach to it is. In contrast to his French contemporaries and colleagues, such as Denis Diderot, Marie Jeanne Riccoboni, or Pierre Rémond de St. Albine, whose avid reader, critic, and, at times, translator he was, Lessing puts less emphasis on the moral vindication of acting, as he never questioned it. Rather, he seems to have understood its artistic value as a given. Lessing also largely neglected the flourishing debate around the morality of the acting profession and did not join in on the general perception of the theatrical performance as euphemism for professionalized pretense, as intrinsically dishonest and therefore morally contemptible.[44] Instead, he approaches acting with almost scientific precision, and recognizes it as respectable, artistic work with educative function and value. Acting is, as Natalya Baldyga puts it, reinterpreted as an educative strategy, as a potent

[42] Cf. Marx' comments on "imaginary theatre" in which, through an excessive use of stage instructions, actual stagings by actual bodies are technically made expendable. Cf. Marx, "Regieanweisung/Szenenanweisung," p. 145.
[43] Cf. Košenina, Alexander. *Anthropologie und Schauspielkunst. Studien zur "eloquentia corporis" im 18. Jahrhundert.* Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995.
[44] For more a more detailed read on Lessing's relationship to French acting theories cf. for instance Otto, Uwe. *Lessings Verhältnis zur französischen Darstellungstheorie.* Peter Lang/Herbert Lang, 1976.

"civilizing force"[45] even—though I would add that, for Lessing, any such political implications are secondary, and if made explicit, were always derived from artistic observation.

More importantly, Lessing's interest in the acting body needs to be understood as the result of actual experience, as documents of hands-on experience with the bodies on stage. From young Lessing's early artistic exchange with actress "Neuberin," one of the earliest reformers of the profession, and ally in Lessing's dispute with Johann Christoph Gottsched, to his long and intensive collaboration with "Meister Ekhof," an actor who brought many of Lessing's male characters to life, his many relations to the actors of his time influenced his work and, most notably, his archive of theoretic-dramaturgical comments.[46] The already quoted *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, a collection of critical texts on performances of plays he has visited and studied between the years 1767 and 1769, is prefaced as well as concluded by critical contemplations on the status quo of acting as art form. Lessing's rather dire—and markedly preliminary—conclusion from 1768 simultaneously establishes a clear artistic agenda, a call for professionalization:

> Wir haben Schauspieler, aber keine Schauspielkunst. Wenn es vor Alters eine solche Kunst gegeben hat: so haben wir sie nicht mehr; sie ist verloren; sie muß ganz von neuem wieder erfunden werden. Allgemeines Geschwätze darüber hat man in verschiedenen Sprachen genug: aber spezielle, von jedermann erkannte, mit Deutlichkeit und Präzision abgefaßte Regeln, nach welchen der Tadel oder das Lob des Akteurs in einem besondern Falle zu bestimmen sei, deren wüßte ich kaum zwei oder drei. Daher kömmt es, daß alles Raisonnement über diese Materie immer so schwankend und vieldeutig scheinet, daß es eben kein Wunder ist, wenn der Schauspieler, der nichts als eine glückliche Routine hat, sich auf alle Weise dadurch beleidiget findet. Gelobt wird er sich nie genug, getadelt aber allezeit viel zuviel glauben: ja öfters wird er gar nicht einmal wissen, ob man ihn tadeln

[45] Cf. Baldyga, Natalya. "Corporeal Eloquence and Sensate Cognition: G. E. Lessing, Acting Theory, and Properly Feeling Bodies in Eighteenth-Century Germany." *Theatre Survey* 58, Issue 2, May 2017, pp. 162–185.
[46] Cf. for instance Hildebrandt, *Lessing Biographie,* p. 49ff.

> oder loben wollen. Überhaupt hat man die Anmerkung schon längst gemacht, daß die Empfindlichkeit der Künstler, in Ansehung der Kritik, in eben dem Verhältnisse steigt, in welchem die Gewißheit und Deutlichkeit und Menge der Grundsätze ihrer Künste abnimmt. – So viel zu meiner, und selbst zu deren Entschuldigung, ohne die ich mich nicht zu entschuldigen hätte. (*HD*, CI-CIV)[47]

The foundation of an entire art form: not only do these passages provide extensive evidence for Lessing's keen interest in questions of performance, and all multi-media aspects theatre entails, but these passages are clearly an attempt towards the discursive foundation[48] of acting as art form with unmatched potential.

By providing new critical vocabulary, by finding words and metaphors to theorize the performative art, by describing and valuing it through a ruthless identification of its shortcomings, Lessing assigns meaning to the work on stage. And surely, Lessing's study of performance exceeds what can be found in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, as there are numerous lesser-known drafts and studies on acting, performing, and gesturing, largely published only posthumously and from his literary remains. Alongside with the stage instructions in his plays, these drafts, comments and

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[47] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 101st – 104th pieces, pp. 683-684.
Translation: "We have actors, but no art of acting. If there ever were such an art, it is gone; we have lost it; it must be entirely reinvented. There is plenty of general commentary on the subject in many languages; but specific, universally acknowledged rules that are clearly and precisely formulated and by which the criticism or praise of an actor in any particular case may be justified? Of these I can think of perhaps two or three. That is why all arguments on this subject seem dithering and ambivalent; that is why it is really not surprising that the actor with a successful career may find himself injured from all sides. He will believe himself criticized too much and never praised enough; all too often, he will not even know for certain whether someone intends to criticize or praise him. It has long been noted overall that the sensitivity of artists with regard to criticism increases in exact proportion to the decrease in the certainty and clarity and number of principles of their art. – So much for my excuses, on my own account and on account of those without whom I would not have to excuse myself." (*Hamburg Dramaturgy: A New and Complete Translation:* http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/)

[48] The wording, "discursive foundation," is not chosen arbitrarily and deliberately reminiscent of Foucault's "founder of discursivity." Without being able to lay this out in full detail here, I will argue that Lessing, especially regarding his function for the history of performance studies, and as almost mandatory reference point for scholarship outside the field, very much holds authorial and discursive function deserving of that name. Cf. Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Edited by James D. Faubion, translated by Robert Hurley (e.a.). The New Press, 1998.

fragments not only date his interest in the matter back to the very beginnings of his literary production, but also reveal important developments in his approach.

"Der Schauspieler"

The collection of fragmental drafts, largely neglected by scholarship, and subsumed under the title "Entwürfe zu einer Abhandlung 'Der Schauspieler,'"[49] are the earliest evidence of Lessing's life-long interest in the theory of bodily and gestural expression. The exact status of these notes and drafts is not entirely clear. Lessing's brother Karl, who was the first to publish an abridged version of the drafts in 1823, claimed that the texts were the products of his brother's very first writerly attempts, and predate even his earliest plays. Some scholars, however, find that this cannot be entirely true, as the drafts show influence by works that were only written or translated into German a few years later.[50] The fact is that the thoughts laid out in these texts—whether they were written in 1748 or 1754—seek to tackle the same questions he later proceeds to address in his dramas and the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie,* and that they are evidence for Lessing's decades-long occupation with the question of the acting body as the central producer of meaning on stage.

What makes the piece particular, and what may have contributed to its rather neglectful treatment by scholarship, is, firstly, its format. Print versions of the draft struggle to capture the essence of the text which resembles more a series of brief definitions, lists, and classifications, relating to each other in complicated tree diagrams. The actor, according to Lessing, has two

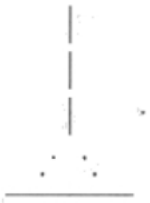
[49] "Entwürfe zu einer Abhandlung 'Der Schauspieler.'" *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden.* Band 3. Werke 1754-1757, pp. 320-329; 1107-1112. Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.
[50] Ibd., p. 1107.

primary means of expression: movement ("Bewegung") and sound ("Töne").[51] His focus in this part of the draft lies clearly on the first, movement, which is also paraphrased as gestures ("Geberden")[52] and which he sees divided between gestures of the entire body and gestures of its parts ("seiner Glieder").[53] He explains why feet do not count as *parts* of the body:

> [...] weil man zwar eine Bewegung mit der Hand und dem Kopfe machen kann, ohne daß die Lage des Körpers verändert werde; nicht aber die geringste Bewegung des Fußes, ohne daß sie nicht eine Veränderung des ganzen Körpers verursachen sollte.[54]

The feet's movement, according to Lessing, inevitably determine location and posture of the entire body, so they are different from gestures exercised by hands or the head. His interest in the feet (the tree diagrams proceed to exclude hands—"Hände Sprache"[55]—and the head or the face and its "Mienen")[56] and the way of posing and carrying oneself on stage relates, "gehen" und "halten,"[57] emphasize the focus on movement, and particularly the relation of bodies-on-stage and the stage itself. In addition, little sketches instructive are inserted into the script. The sketches show Lessing's conceptualization of the stage's space as a universal horizontal level, and the drawings illustrate the significance of the specific relation of any eloquent body on that stage—and thus in relationship to that horizontal level:

[51] Ibd., p. 320.
[52] Ibd.
[53] Ibd., p. 321.
[54] Ibd.
[55] Ibd.
[56] Ibd.
[57] Ibd., p. 323.


(fig. A)

(fig. B)

(fig. C)

(fig. D)[58]

The different figures, stick-figure sketches of bodies on stage, express different affects ("Furcht, Entsetzen, Scham,")[59] actions or intentions ("Nachdenken," "Absicht zu bitten,")[60] or may say more about the figure's identity ("das Alter.")[61] Perhaps most importantly, the particular line of their body also reveals the character's degree of authenticity: "Das gekünstelte [Gehen],"[62] for example, is described by Lessing in spatial terms as: "Wann sie [die Linie] vorwärts einen stumpfen Winkel macht."[63] Another note explains why the body's axis in movement is so significant: "Ich nenne sie die gekünstelte weil man sich Zwang antut, die Last des Körpers, welche vorfallen würde, zurück zu halten."[64] Lessing explains "inauthenticity" in physical terms: defying gravity, defying the body's natural bends and creating unnatural stiffness is—well, unnatural. An unnatural gait is then further connected to a certain state of mind: "das Gehen mit dem steifen und gestreckten Fuße ist der Gang eines stolzen und ruhmrädigen."[65] Young Lessing, here, reveals himself as one of the first

[58] Ibd. (all figures)
[59] Ibd.
[60] Ibd.
[61] Ibd.
[62] Ibd., p. 322.
[63] Ibd.
[64] Ibd.
Translation: "I call it inauthentic because you are forcing yourself into an upright position, even though your body's weight would require you to bend over."
[65] Ibd., p. 323.
Translation: "To walk with a stiff and sprawled leg is the gait of a proud person, thirsty for fame."

proponents of "natural" acting techniques—which needs to be seen as crucial part of his agenda to create "gemischte," relatable characters on stage.[66]

Regardless of whether or not these were truly the first (semi-)textual drafts Lessing ever produced, they are obviously less informed by hands-on experience than his later work. Over the years, Lessing will lose his strict and overly schematic tone and will abandon and loosen some of the dyadic structures with which the "line" between authentic and inauthentic behavior blurs. But his interest in the matter, the gesture and the acting body, persists. And even though there are no comparable stick-figure body sketches to be found in the paratextual drafts of his later work, I argue that this is not because he lost his interest in the matter or prioritized the eloquence of words over the eloquence of movement. Quite on the contrary, he just found more appropriate genres—stage instructions, for instance—to address the eloquent bodies on stage, and to relate his texts to *their* bodies' gestures.

Hamburgische Dramaturgie

The much more comprehensive text—or collection of texts—Lessing wrote on acting is the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie.* As already mentioned, both foreword and conclusion contain thoughts on acting, and several passages continue the work of establishing acting as art form. The passage of the fifth piece, a brief definition of acting and its specific function within the arts, is indicative for this:

[66] Cf. Heeg, *Das Phantasma der natürlichen Gestalt* (particularly the chapter on Lessing)

> Die Kunst des Schauspielers stehet hier, zwischen den bildenden Künsten und der Poesie, mitten inne. Als sichtbare Malerei muß zwar die Schönheit ihr höchstes Gesetz sein; doch als transitorische Malerei braucht sie ihren Stellungen jene Ruhe nicht immer zu geben, welche die alten Kunstwerke so imponierend macht. [...] Denn sie ist zwar eine stumme Poesie, aber die sich unmittelbar unsern Augen verständlich machen will; und jeder Sinn will geschmeichelt sein, wenn er die Begriffe, die man ihm in die Seele zu bringen gibt, unverfälscht überliefern soll. (*HD*, V)[67]

This characterization of acting and its function within the disciplines reads as extension of the distinction between visual arts and literature famously laid out in *Laokoon:* "[...] die Zeitfolge ist das Gebiete des Dichters, so wie der Raum das Gebiete des Malers."[68] Literature, operating in time, painting expressed in space, renders acting the true mediation between the two artforms. Tellingly, these observations, though not part of the same argumentation and published in different books, were written within the same year[69] which makes the correlation between these observations quite evident. The specific wording, the striking analogy in grammar, and the extension of the same metaphor, additionally highlight the connection between the pieces—and confirms acting's central position within Lessing's systematization of the arts.

The two statements' commonalities—the grammatical subject and the domain of metaphors used—simultaneously form the crux of the argument. Firstly, Lessing emphasizes the active role of the artist as producer of meaning. It is the poet and the painter, who are commanding their

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[67] Translation: "The art of the actor exists midway between the visual arts and poetry. As visible painting, beauty must be its highest principle; but as transitory painting it need not always give its postures that calm that made ancient art works so impressive. [...] For although this is a silent poetry, it wants to make itself immediately understood by our eyes, and every sense is flattered when it is able to communicate directly to the soul those concepts that have been entrusted to it." (*Hamburg Dramaturgy: A New and Complete Translation:* http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/)

[68] Lessing, *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 5/2 WERKE 1766 – 1769.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003, p. 130.

[69] *Laokoon* first was published in 1766, the passage on acting is from the 5th piece of *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, written in May 1767.

respective fields, it is the actor who acts in between: it is always the artist who defines the discipline. Secondly, the metaphors to describe the relation between the artistic disciplines complement each other in a significant way. In *Laokoon*, Lessing imagines artistic expression as "Gebiete,"[70] which adds not only a spatial, but a somewhat territorial component to the constellation. Indeed, the poet and the painter command their respective "Gebiete," territories, which, paradoxically, are divided by the two categories that serve as the precondition for any "Gebiet" in the first place: time and space. The passage on the actor, then, continues to speak in spatial metaphors, but realizes a dynamic "inter"- space, an in-between, something less territorial, and in flux. As though to permeate an all too rigidly dyadic structure, the actor gets introduced as synaesthetic figure ("*jeder Sinn* will geschmeichelt sein"—*every sense* needs to be flattered) who mediates between the respective fields by the power of permanent transition.

The actor thus acts as central figure, as someone whose art is "mitten inne," in between, and as someone who practices "transitorische Malerei," painting in flux. Lessing's explicit reframing of the work on stage and the performative arts is evident. Describing acting further as "silent poetry," seeking to affect "unmittelbar," in an unmediated way, and presenting abstract concepts ("Begriffe") and contents of the soul "unverfälscht," without distortion: all of these attributes do not merely valorize the new profession,[71] but also connect it to central philosophical questions of that time, as the problem of mediation, or, more precisely: a new awareness of the problem, is constitutive for early Enlightenment thought.[72] Lessing particular interest, however,

[70] The German "Gebiet," generally translatable as "field," but also as "area" or "territory," also evokes political connotation, as the verb "gebieten" translates to "commanding" or "ruling."
[71] Especially the description of acting as "unverfälscht," as "undiluted" and "genuine" artistic expression, are a strong repudiation of the moralistic discourse, and the notion that actors are dishonest and professional deceivers.
[72] Cf. for instance Michelsen's text on "the problem of immediacy" in Michelsen, Peter. *Der unruhige Bürger. Studien zu Lessing und zur Literatur des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts.* Königshausen und Neumann, 1990, p. 180ff.

allows him to point to a structural paradox within acting that has little or nothing to do with the actor's inner disposition, their temperament or their degree of "authenticity" on stage.[73] Rather, and in a very basic way, the actor's body is recognized as an object of interest—not for moral, but for media theory. As human medium, acting bodies are in movement, and *in actu* they move the medium—that is: the literal center—with them. Their performance of content, thus, is mediation of a special sort, as content and means, affect and effect, tend to become increasingly indistinguishable at the site of an actor's body:

> Eine schöne Figur, eine bezaubernde Miene, ein sprechendes Auge, ein reizender Tritt, ein lieblicher Ton, eine melodische Stimme: sind Dinge, die sich nicht wohl mit Worten ausdrücken lassen. Doch sind es auch weder die einzigen noch größten Vollkommenheiten des Schauspielers. Schätzbare Gaben der Natur, zu seinem Berufe sehr nötig, aber noch lange nicht seinen Beruf erfüllend! er muß überall mit dem Dichter denken; er muß da, wo dem Dichter etwas Menschliches widerfahren ist, für ihn denken. (*HD*, Vorrede)[74]

Evidently, Lessing's approach to acting, both unreservedly affirmative and hopeful, here is written *in theory*; what he describes is an ideal. His reviews of real-life actors and acting, as is well known, often came in a very different tone.[75] Yet, the trust in performance, and even more so the human

[73] All of these questions were relevant to the texts by Lessing's predecessors such as Diderot, Riccoboni and St. Albine.
[74] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, Preface, p. 186.
Translation: "A beautiful figure, a captivating face, an expressive eye, a charming walk, a mellifluous tone, a melodic voice: these are all things that are not easily expressed in words. But these are neither the only nor the greatest perfections of the actor. They are valuable gifts of nature, necessary to his profession, but they are far from sufficient for his work! He must constantly think with the writer, and when something all too human overtakes the writer, he must think *for* him." (*Hamburg Dramaturgy: A New and Complete Translation:* http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/)
[75] Cf. Jürs-Munby, Karen. "Of Textual Bodies And Actual Bodies: The Abjection of Performance in Lessing's Dramaturgy." *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 30, 2005, pp.19–35, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307883304000847.

actor whose powers, if necessary, he deems capable of compensating for the writer's shortcomings in thinking—especially if "etwas Menschliches," "something human"—overtakes them, is, I think, not just a gesture of modesty but derived from his very own experience and praxis as a writer writing for actors.

"Schauspieler"-in Emilia?

Transvestites causing gender trouble,[76] heroines scheming and cunningly performing intrigues,[77] teenagers dressing up and posing as the hero they wished to be:[78] Lessing's repertoire of dramatic personae bursts with actors and actresses in disguise. Albeit short in true villains, the plays are populated with characters with an affinity for deception, pretense and other expressions of "inauthentic" theatrical behavior. Interestingly, Lessing eschews a general condemnation of such "inauthentic" behavior and even seems to subtly advocate the educative function lies can assume. Indeed, his plays offer vivid illustrations of what lies can do to facilitate intellectual advancement. Ranging from Philotas and his complete and rather foolish identification with the phantasm of an ideal, to Minna's calculated assumption of the role of her partner, by pretending that it was she who had lost fortune and status: these characters and storylines, negotiating entirely different forms and functions of lying and pretense, can hardly be subsumed under one and the same term. On a meta-level, Lessing's plays unfold an entire spectrum of theatricality.

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[76] Lessing, *Der Misogyn. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 1 WERKE 1743 – 1750.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.
[77] Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm.*
[78] Lessing, *Philotas. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 4 WERKE 1758 – 1759.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.

Still, an eager quest for authenticity often seems to lie at the core of scholarly approaches to Lessing. When looking for the "authentic" core of his plays, readers have focused on an analysis of the characters' rhetorical ability and scrutinized the spoken language and the logics language executes on Lessing's characters. Indeed, it is often their specific eloquence that sparks suspicion and becomes subject to scrutinization:

> Wie der Schauspieler in Lessings Poetik des Dramas integriert ist, so gleichen schon seine Figuren Schauspielern, die erst durch die Realisation des Textes zur Figur werden. Lesen, Denken und Sprechen fallen zusammen in einen Akt.[79]

While the theatricality and the—at times, and certainly in the case of *Emilia*—fatal rhetorical brilliance of Lessing's characters has been subject to thorough investigation, I will argue that meta-theatrical qualities of such kind are not only to be found in the characters' "Lesen, Denken und Sprechen," but are, in a much more immediate and direct way, inscribed in their gestures and choreographies. Emilia, in some way Lessing's most explicit comment on the art of (female) acting, and a correction of earlier attempts to use stage instructions, will reveal the complexity of the issue.

[79] Translation: "As the actor is already integrated into Lessing's poetics of the drama, his characters resemble actors, who become figures only through the realization of the text. Reading, thinking and speaking become the same act." Schröder, Jürgen. *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Sprache und Drama.* Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972, p. 306.

Emilia Galotti: On Turning Beings and Being Turned

Drah' di net um, oh oh oh
Schau, schau,
der Kommissar geht um! oh oh oh
Er wird dich anschauen
Und du weißt warum:
Die Lebenslust bringt dich um

Falco, *Der Kommissar* (1981)[80]

Emilia Galotti,[81] first published in 1772, is often read as Lessing's personal conclusion of the bourgeois tragedy genre. While instructing motion, and especially affecting *e*-motion, is something Lessing experiments with rather excessively in his earlier plays, such as *Miss Sara Sampson*,[82] the stage instructions in *Emilia Galotti* are noticeably reduced and have, consequently, received little scholarly attention. This is surprising, considering the fact that the focus on the (female) body in *Emilia*, and the question to what degree it can be seduced and corrupted, instructed and influenced by language, is negotiated thematically on such an explicit level.

Certainly, scholars have looked at body politics within *Emilia* as, especially recently, the necessity of a "multi-sensual" approach to Lessing's œuvre has been acknowledged.[83] Carl Niekerk,

[80] Falco. "Der Kommissar. " Lyrics, URL: https://genius.com/Falco-der-kommissar-lyrics.
[81] Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*. *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 7 WERKE 1770 – 1773*. Herausgegeben von Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003.
[82] Cf. *Miss Sara Sampson*, as well as Ziolkowski's argument to find the text's numerous mimetic and gestural instructions also outside the actual instructions. "Es ließe sich von Szenen zu Szene im Detail zeigen, auf welch verschiedenartige Weise Lessing in der 'Miß Sara Sampson' den Schauspieler zum Gebärdenspiel führen möchte. Nur zum geringeren Teil geschieht es in direkter Form: durch Regiebemerkungen und Bühnenanweisungen. Sehr viel häufiger finden sich mimische und gestische Anweisungen." Ziolkowski, Theodore. "Language and Mimetic Action in Lessings 'Miß Sara Sampson'" *The Germanic Review* 40, 1965, pp. 261-76.
[83] Cf. especially Košenina, Alexander and Stefanie Stockhorst, editors. *Lessing und die Sinne*. Wehrhahn Verlag, 2016.

for instance, designating *Emilia Galotti* the most "radical"[84] amongst Lessing's texts, argues that the play delivers answers to the question of how sensual body knowledge ("Körper-Wissen") can be turned into ethical action; questions, that, according to him, ultimately remained unanswered by Lessing's other female-led dramas, such as *Miss Sara Sampson* or *Minna von Barnhelm*.[85] While I do support the theory that there is very precise and deliberate employment of "body knowledge" to be found in *Emilia*, I suggest looking for it in very specific places—in the peri- rather than the paratexts, in the direct *instructions* in-between,—especially, as such a connection between Lessing's choreographic outlines and the text's bodily "radicalness" is, I argue, yet to be made.

Overemphasizing the play's emancipatory impetus and reading it as purely affirmative argument for bodily liberation or even gender equality would neglect the play's inner inconsistencies. More importantly, it disregards that the text is, on some level, dependent on the very language it criticizes. I argue that the question to what degree Emilia's body is seducible, corruptible, and at the mercy of the prince's words, necessarily extends to the meta-theatrical level, and renegotiates the acting body as nexus where instructed and authentic (e)motion meet and are deliberately made indistinguishable. Much more explicitly than any other text by Lessing, *Emilia* requires reader, audience and critics to engage in intensive body hermeneutics—reading *its* signs—without, of course, neglecting the importance of language itself. To do so, I will focus mainly on one body throughout the play, Emilia's. Such specific focus on Emilia—on her *body* to be more

[84] Niekerk takes the term from J. Israel, who, in his differentiation of various trends within the Enlightenment movement, identifies its radical protagonists – Lessing being one of them – among other things by showing their progressive approach towards thinking the body. Cf. Israel, Jonathan I.. *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*, Oxford University Press, 2001.

[85] "Lessings Emilia Galotti thematisiert vom Anfang an die Frage, die in Miß Sara Sampson und Minna von Barnhelm unbeantwortet bleibt, nämlich, wie das von diesen Stücken thematisierte Körper-Wissen in ethisches Handeln umgesetzt werden kann. Niekerk, Carl. Lessings Körperlichkeits-Entwürfe zwischen Richardson und Diderot." *Lessing und die Sinne.* Edited by Alexander Košenina and Stefanie Stockhorst. Wehrhahn Verlag, 2016, pp. 99-121, p. 117.

precise—quickly leads to what I shall explain as the drama's core, its motive, its engine. I argue that it is precisely the interdependence of rhetorical and performative power within Emilia's body that creates the play's inner tension.

The fact that *Emilia Galotti* famously commences with the prolonged absence of the title heroine, and that the author has us wait until the end of the second act—almost up until the middle of the play—to grant us a personal encounter with the body in question, is in that regard especially intriguing. In private correspondences Lessing himself insinuated that just because it is titled *Emilia Galotti*, it might not even be *about* her. In a letter to his brother, Karl Lessing, from February 1772, only about a month before the play's premiere, he writes:

> Weil das Stück Emilia heißt, ist es darum mein Vorsatz gewesen, Emilien zu dem hervorstechendsten, oder auch nur zu einem hervorstechenden Charakter zu machen? Ganz und gar nicht. Die Alten nannten ihre Stücke wohl nach Personen, die gar nicht aufs Theater kamen.[86]

In this letter Lessing responds to his brother's critique of the play, as Karl had found fault with the depiction of Emilia's character in the first couple of acts (which, at that point, had been the only parts he had read). Lessing's rebuttal with an explicit reference to ancient plays, often named after persons who would then not even make an appearance, surely marks Emilia's initial bodily absence and her general elusiveness all the more relevant, as it appears to be in itself a vague gesture of citation. But then, what exactly is the point of serving a heroine in pieces, of denying us access, of citing "Emilia" to the stage, firstly, by withholding her? A close look at the textual and peritextual

[86] Translation: "Just because the play is called Emilia, should it indeed have been my intention to make Emilia the most prominent, or even just one of the most prominent characters? Not at all. The ancients named their plays after persons who would never come on stage."

strategies is necessary to find out exactly how Emilia moves in and out of the text—as body of movement, as bodiless motive,—how she switches and is shifted between presence and absence, and why.

(I.) Unhappy Citations

Arguably, the entire constellation of the plot is arranged in Emilia's physical absence. Adhering to the classical Aristotelian structure in terms of unity of action and time, *Emilia Galotti*, tellingly, breaks with the continuity of space. Lessing's decided suspension of dramatic poetics that promote spatial restriction, perhaps already hints towards the importance of movement on all levels of the play. The very specific movement between the scenes—and more precisely: the movement of the bodies on stage—is where the logical core of the text expresses itself most urgently.

The play consists of five acts: the first being set at the prince's palace, the second at the bourgeois home of the Galottis, and acts three to five in the prince's secondary palace, his maison de plaisir, "Lustschloss Dosalo." Act one and two, a parallel montage between the aristocratic and the bourgeois realm, culminate, finally, in Emilia's actual appearance, by which point, I argue, the plot's finale—Emilia's violent death by suicide/infanticide—reveals itself as already fated. Since it takes time to meet Emilia *in person*, I will commence with a closer look at several incidences of Emilia, *not-in-person*: her *appearances* (Erscheinungen), which, I argue, not only precede her actual *entrance* (Auftritt), but also reveal the central function this character has for the play in terms of citation and citability.

The curtain opens, and the play begins with the prince, who is depicted in a scene of what apparently constitutes a regular day at work for a 16th century Italian aristocrat. Hettore Gonzaga, prince of Guastalla, is seated at his desk, and absent-mindedly skims through letters and petitions, rather weary about his work and about his own position within the political system. While the bourgeois and aristocratic realm are, at this point, still intact by means of spatial separation, the scene already focalizes the permeability of the constellation, the transgressive attempts on both sides. The juxtaposition of bourgeois requests for political action on the one hand, and the prince's portrayal as affective, emotional and private person on the other, eschews the idea that these classes are still completely distinguishable or, on a personal level, different at all. Moreover, the fact that politics are really not what Lessing seeks to prioritize[87] is made clear rather explicitly: already sentence four of the prince's half-politicizing and self-pitying soliloquy, gets abruptly broken off by the sudden appearance of a name—*the* name: "Emilia."

> DER PRINZ *an einem Arbeitstische, voller Briefschaften und Papiere, deren einige er durchläuft:* Klagen, nichts als Klagen! Bittschriften, nichts als Bittschriften! – Die traurigen Geschäfte; und man beneidet uns noch! – Das glaub' ich; wenn wir allen helfen könnten: dann wären wir zu beneiden. – Emilia? *indem er noch eine von den Bittschriften aufschlägt, und nach dem unterschriebenen Namen sieht:* Eine Emilia? – Aber, eine Emilia Bruneschi, – nicht Galotti. Nicht Emilia Galotti! – Was will sie, diese Emilia Bruneschi? *er lieset:* Viel gefordert; sehr viel. – Doch sie heißt Emilia. Gewährt! [...] (*EG*, 293)[88]

[87] In another letter to his brother, Lessing states: "Du siehst wohl, daß es weiter nichts als eine modernisierte, von allem Staatsinteresse befreite Virginia sein soll."/ "You are right in seeing that it [the play] is supposed to be nothing but a modernized Virginia, ridded from all political interest." –Lessing, *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 11/2 WERKE 1770 – 1776*, p. 362.

[88] Translation: "*The Prince, seated at a desk which is covered with papers.*
PRINCE Complaints; nothing but complaints! Petitions; nothing but petitions! Wretched employment! And yet we are envied! To be sure, if we could relieve everyone, we might indeed be envied. Emilia? *opening a petition, and looking at the signature:* An Emilia? Yes – – but an Emilia Bruneschi – not Galotti. Not Emilia Galotti. What does she want, this Emilia Bruneschi? *reads:* She asks much – too much. But her name is Emilia. It is granted!"

On a pragmatic level, this little scene primarily serves as introduction of the heroine's name. "Emilia": its six-time repetition within the very first lines of the script has a didactic effect; the prince's repetition becomes—also—site of a rehearsal: the prince's as well as our own. The dramaturgy of the punctuation marks only adds to such an effect and also creates strange inconsistency within the name, as "Emilia" is articulated in a mode of repetitive variation: inflected as question (*her?*), as proposition (*her*, not *her*.), and as exclamation (*not her*!), even in the incident of "her" very first appearance through mere invocation, "Emilia" is already an incoherent entity. The process of signification is deficient: "Emilia," the name, is disconnected from the body the prince has in mind. It is as though Emilia's name already comes in quotation marks and is quoting and re-quoting itself. Instead of delivering this significant body by means of a proper entrance and right away, "Emilia" is cited to the stage as multiplicity, she is one of many, she already is what she will be: one in "thousands."[89]

But is this, then, actually a—happy—act of citation? The double meaning of citation as laid out by Rüdiger Campe[90] seems to come into collision with "Emilia" in a significant way. Situating the term at the intersection of legal and theatrical discourse, but also, more importantly, describing it as simultaneously rhetorical and as performative action, Campe defines citation as

> [...] the process by which a thing (or person) is, by being cited, made to appear before an audience—whether to bear witness before a jury, to undergo scrutiny before an assembly of

[89] To coax her father into killing her, Emilia reminds him: "Nichts Schlimmeres zu vermeiden sprangen Tausende in die Fluten, und sind Heilige! – Geben Sie mir, mein Vater, geben Sie mir diesen Dolch." (*EG*, 369)
[90] Campe, Rüdiger. "Three modes of citation: Historical, Casuistic, and Literary Writing in Büchner." *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture Theory.* Vol. 89, Iss. 1, 2014.

> experts, or to honor a public with its authoritative presence (cf. the German expression *jemanden vor Gericht zitieren*).[91]

"Appearing before an audience," "bearing witness," "undergoing scrutiny," "honoring a public with [...] authoritative presence"—does "Emilia," at this point, qualify for any of these juridical/political actions? If citation indeed strives towards bodily evidence and physical presence, its dependence on the actual appearance renders the prince's summon of "Emilia," for now, a perfect failure. The fact that Emilia is introduced, firstly, as one in many, and secondly, as mere name, as elusive figure who appears on stage, solely by association, leaves *her body* literally out of the play. For now, *it* is protected by its absence: it is immune to suggestion or seduction, the citational power of the prince's language, simply because she is not (yet) *here*.

The opening scene establishes a clear separation between political and rhetorical power to cite. While the prince is easily deciding over life and death from afar and rather unceremoniously grants Emilia Bruneschi the death sentence she requested, other implications of such absolute political sovereignty, as for instance the ability to cite anyone to court, remain solely theoretical and are, de facto, disabled. The fact that the prince does not even consider making use of his hypothetical freedom to summon anyone he wishes, emphasizes his depiction as private person (and, at least to some degree as relatable human being). Rather, what the prince seeks to master, is rhetorical ability: "Emilia!", "Emilia?", "Emilia –"—Emilia's *body's absence* gives Hettore some time for répétition, for rehearsal, to make sure that, once she will actually be here and hear him, her name will come out just right.

[91] Ibd., pp. 47–48.

Hettore and his quotation of the name indicate that citation can take on multiple forms, and that the question of *how* to cite is essential. Would the prince (ab)use his political power and utter an *instruction* (by summoning Emilia to court, for instance), his citational power would be entirely contextual. The question of whether or not such a citation would be "happy," would not at all depend on the happiness (or any kind of affect) of the people involved in such constellation, but it would depend almost entirely on the reality of context (e.g. his political sovereignty, her legal powerlessness). *Seduction*, by contrast, requires a much more complicated and precarious communicative practice. It is a form of citing the body whose success and "happiness" is based on affective participation of the addressee and their body: *its* "happiness." While the threat posed to Emilia's body is undoubtedly rooted within patriarchal structures and political despotism, this threat can only become reality by mediation through her own body, its potential to collaborate with the perpetrator, its corruptibility: "Verführung ist die wahre Gewalt"[92] (EG, 369).

(II.) Twisted Anagnorisis

Der Prinz. Conti, mit den Gemälden wovon er das eine <u>verwandt</u> gegen einen Stuhl lehnet. (EG, 295)

Immediately after the initial introduction of her name, Emilia Galotti, Emilia is made to appear on stage again. This time as static, pictorial representation of herself: she is introduced as "ein weibliches Porträt," a nameless female portrait. Permeated by an elaborate and digressive discourse on art and its function, the prince and the painter Conti, from whom he had ordered a portrait of

[92] Translation: "seduction is the real force."

his ex-lover, Countess Orsina, the portrait of Emilia gets carried onto stage along with the portrait of Orsina. Again, Emilia is as the haphazard double of another woman. And she appears "*verwandt*"[93]—turned away: the prince as well as the audience are denied visual access—even to her picture, as she—or rather *it*—is decidedly kept from view and, at first, remains unnoticed. Discussing beauty, art and women on a semi-abstract level, the banter between the two men features clever and not-so-clever aphorisms on the subject. In a debate about Orsina's portrait, which the prince, no longer infatuated with Orsina, dismisses as too flatteringly beautiful, the problems of the contract he has with his painter—art by demand: "Prinz, die Kunst geht nach Brot"[94] (*EG,* 294)—unfold. When painting the requested portrait of Countess Orsina, Conti had done so, assuming that the prince wanted a beautiful—and flattering—painting of his lover. Not aware of the fact that the prince's romantic feelings for Orsina had already cooled down, or rather turned into hate and contempt, he had painted her "with the eyes of love," "mit Augen der Liebe" (*EG*, 297). Since Conti's job consists in the artistic achievement of closest possible resemblance—not between the portrait and the model, but rather between the prince's *idea* of the model and the portrait—the endeavor had failed. Interestingly, the incident of success we are then about to witness—the perfect congruence between the prince's idea and the painter's work—is not the result of an order, but serendipitous coincidence.

Not knowing what he will be about to see, the prince is only mildly curious about the second piece of work, the painter had *also* brought along and, at first, reluctant to look at it.

> DER PRINZ [...] Was ist das andere Stück?

[93] The double meaning of "verwandt" in German – both "turned away" or "hidden from view," but also "*related to*" – could be read as additional demarcation of Emilia's existence as cited plurality, as one-of-many.
[94] Idiom to express the artist's dependence on payment, literal translation: "Prince, art depends on bread."

> CONTI *indem er es holt, und noch verkehrt in der Hand hält:* Auch ein weibliches Porträt.
> DER PRINZ So möcht' ich es bald – lieber gar nicht sehen.
> (*EG*, 297)[95]

All we know about the infamous portrait at this point, are gender and genre: "another female portrait." The prince's immediate disinterest is, considering his approach to art, logically consistent—the fact that the painter drew and brought the portrait in the first place, however, less so. Is this staged coincidence? Or what is the motive behind Emilia's second quasi-appearance that is about to happen?

As the significant connection between the name "Emilia" and the pictorial representation has yet to be made, all audience and prince have for now, are two unconnected signifiers, loosely pointing towards an absence: *another* Emilia (Galotti, not Bruneschi), and *another* female portrait (someone, not Orsina). The moment of the reunion of name and picture, filling both of them with referential significance, qualifies as—premature and sadly unilateral—anagnorisis. On the level of the plot, it really does not do much, it merely illustrates the prince's love, and perhaps its superficial nature. Quite obviously, it also serves as advertisement for Emilia's outward appearance. On a structural level, however, its significance becomes clear only when considering the details of the scene's notation, the scripted interplay between physical movement and logical coherence. Conti, slightly disgruntled by the prince's rejection of his portrait of Orsina, but confident about

[95] Translation:
"PRINCE [...] What is the other?
CONTI *taking it up and holding it still reversed:* It is also a female portrait.
PRINCE Then I had almost rather not see it."

his second piece of work, advertises the ominous second painting. Referring to his *other* model—Emilia—as "Gegenstand," "object," the discussion begins:

> CONTI Eine bewundernswürdigere Kunst giebt es; aber sicherlich keinen bewundernswürdigern Gegenstand, als diesen.
> DER PRINZ So wett' ich, Conti, daß es des Künstlers eigene Gebieterin ist. – *indem der Maler das Bild umwendet:* Was seh' ich? Ihr Werk, Conti? oder das Werk meiner Phantasie? – Emilia Galotti!
> CONTI Wie, mein Prinz? Sie kennen diesen Engel?
> DER PRINZ *indem er sich zu fassen sucht, aber ohne ein Auge von dem Bilde zu verwenden:* So halb! [...]
> (*EG*, 297)[96]

What the scene, among other things, introduces, is an en passant performance of what I see as Emilia's most iconic move: the *turn*. Evidently, this first movement on stage is still significantly detached from her *body*. Firstly, it is still not her, who is present, but her *portrait*—and secondly, it is not actually her body, executing movement, but "her" *being moved*. She is, at that point, indeed "object" and *motive* rather than in movement *herself*. Yet it is precisely this constellation and the mode of inauthenticity it introduces, that announces the movement that is intricately linked to the figure of Emilia, the movement she and *her* play revolve around: spinning, twisting, cyclical rotation. This turn, I argue, is the initial introduction of the very movement that then appears and

[96] Translation:
"CONTI There may be more admirable examples of art, but a more admirable object that this cannot exist.
PRINCE Then I'll lay a wager, Conti, that it is the portrait of the artist's own mistress. *as the painter turns the picture:* What do I see? Your work, Conty, or the work of my fancy? Emilia Galotti!
CONTI How, Prince? Do you know this angel?
PRINCE *endeavouring to compose himself, but unable to remove his eyes from the picture:* A little. [...]"

keeps appearing and reappearing in pivotal moments of the play, as though an unstoppable dynamic has gotten unleashed in that very first instant of "recognition."

Misreading the scene towards its literal meaning, the prince merely just lost a bet ("I'll lay a wager…"), but reading "quo gestu dicatur,"[97] reading what is notated in the instruction and expressed by the physical movements, leads immediately to the actual core of the logics at stake. Emilia's—or much rather, her representation's—first movement on stage is, as we have seen, that of *being turned*: "*– indem der Maler das Bild umwendet,*" "*as the painter turns the picture.*" Executed the way it is instructed, this movement takes place *while* the prince is talking, in a temporal mode of "*indem*."[98] *Whilst*, *while*, *as* or *during*, all the way through to the very last stage instructions—

> *indem er sie durchsticht* (*EG*, 370)[99]
> *indem er ihm den Dolch vor die Füße wirft* (*EG*, 371)[100]
> *indem er ihm den Dolch aus der Hand reißt* (*EG*, 371)[101]

—the text's choreography is notated in a curious mode of simultaneity and immediacy. The wording "*indem*" is, in the scene between prince and painter of particular significance: it means that the prince's reaction is not a "reaction" in the actual sense of the word, as it does not happen in response to the movement, but simultaneously—almost as though his change of mind was not only caused by the *turn*, but rather made figurative reality by means of it, as though it was expressed through the movement itself.

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[97] "what is expressed by gesture" – Cf. Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.
[98] The expression "indem" is used to express simultaneity of actions; it is usually translated with "as," "while," or "whilst."
[99] Translation: "*as he stabs her.*"
[100] Translation: "*as he throws the dagger in front of his feet.*"
[101] Translation: "*as he wrests the dagger from him.*"

The tension, I argue, is created between the different logical systems language to which language on the one hand and performance on the other adhere. For the textual notation of the *turn*, of course, is bound to the linearity of language and inserted between spoken words; read, as we tend to, word after word, it separates logically opposing speech acts. Performed however, the prince's first statement about man's [sic] foolishness to admire what they find sexually appealing, and his performance of that very foolishness, are already—"*indem*," *immediate*ly—contained within the actual performance of the *turn* itself: that is, part of the same thing.

That begs the question: what kinds of logics collide in this short passage? How is it possible that the prince confuses both: the generalizing (not to mention blatantly sexist) insinuation that all men find their own mistress most beautiful, and the radical questioning of his own perception and performative negation of his initial assumption? Does, what we are observing, qualify as "transition" from one *standpoint* of view to another? Or is more complicated and the portrait not a cause for reconsideration, but merely the site of a *turn* that seeks to reveal the simultaneous presence of logical opposites within the prince's body and speech? Does Emilia's portrait—put in motion by the painter—perhaps realize the inconsistency and ambiguity, the double nature of the prince's affective language, the dangers of which, Emilia's mother, Claudia, later explicitly warns her daughter about?[102]

I argue that this very passage of the dramatic remarriage of Emilia's signifiant, her proper name, "Emilia Galotti," and her pictorial representation, the portrait, happens in rotation

[102] The entire quote reads: "Der Prinz ist galant. Du bist die unbedeutende Sprache der Galanterie zu wenig gewohnt. eine Höflichkeit wird in ihr zur Empfindung; eine Schmeichelei zur Beteurung; ein Einfall zum Wunsche; ein Wunsch zum Vorsatze. Nichts klingt in dieser Sprache wie Alles: und Alles ist in ihr so viel als Nichts. " (*EG*, 318)/ Translation: "The prince is gallant. You are not used to the unmeaning language of gallantry. In this language politeness becomes an emotion; a compliment becomes a declaration; an idea becomes a wish, a wish becomes intention. In this language a mere Nothing sounds like Everything: and Everything means Nothing."

movement, because it *has to*. Explicitly executed by Conti, the artist, this initial spin is also site of a double self-inscription by the author: Lessing as Conti, and Lessing as writer of the stage instruction, the choreographer who sets the play in motion, heralding the downwards spiral to come. For throughout the play, the motion will not stop, but, especially with Emilia's actual entrance, reach a new level, increase, multiply and accelerate—before the fall.

(III.) Wrong Turns

There is a broad variety of synonyms in the German language that express the action or movement of spinning, of twisting, of turning around: "kehren, " "umkehren," "verkehren," "bekehren," "drehen," "umdrehen," "verdrehen," "wegdrehen," "wenden," "umwenden," "umsehen," "verwenden," "abwenden"—to name just a few verb roots and their variations. Some of them are also used reflexively, each of them comes with a slightly different nuance in meaning. When taking a look at the instructions in character speech, but especially in the stage instructions of *Emilia Galotti*, one turns pages and returns in amazement, as the sheer abundance of almost all of these synonyms—from the just discussed initial spin onwards—is remarkable. Here are a few examples:

> DER PRINZ *der sich schnell gegen ihn kehret:* Nun, Conti? (*EG*, 299)[103]

> DER PRINZ [...] Am liebsten kauft' ich dich, Zauberin, von dir selbst! – Dieses Auge voll Liebreiz und Bescheidenheit! Dieser Mund! und wenn er sich zum reden öffnet! wenn er

[103] Translation:
"THE PRINCE *turning to him quickly*"

lächelt! Dieser Mund! – Ich höre kommen. – Noch bin ich mit dir zu neidisch. *indem er das Bild gegen die Wand drehet:* Es wird Marinelli sein. (*EG*, 300)[104]

DER PRINZ Sogleich! sogleich! – Wo blieb es? – *sich nach dem Porträte umsehend:* Auf der Erde? (*EG*, 306)[105]

ANGELO [...] Leb wohl – *tut als ob er gehen wollte, und kehrt wieder um*: Eins muß ich doch fragen. (*EG*, 310)[106]

ANGELO Du reitest vorauf. Reite doch, reite! und kehre dich an nichts! (*EG*, 311)[107]

As this selection highlights, the movement of turning can be used intransitive or transitive: at times, the subject is spinning, at times, a subject is spinning an object. The practical difference between turning around and *being* turned is, perhaps, intuitively evident. However, the very genre most of the play's *turns* are documented in, complicate their message as, when it comes to stage instructions—already instructed movements, already imperative gestures, already ordered by some expressive authority onto some executive body—the exact location of the agency is not easy to identify. Tellingly, amongst this accumulation of the text's twists and turns, we find both: stage instructions and descriptions of a movement of the self, and directly expressed imperatives to turn or to refrain from it.

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[104] Translation:
"THE PRINCE I'd love to buy you, enchantress, from yourself! These eyes, full of love and modesty! This mouth! If only it shall open itself to speak. when it smiles! This mouth! – I hear someone coming. – For now I am too jealous of you *as he turns the picture towards the wall*: It has to be Marinelli."
[105] Translation:
"THE PRINCE Right away! Right away! Where is it? – *turning around, looking for the portrait* – On the floor?"
[106] Translation:
"ANGELO Farewell - *as though he were about to leave, but turning around:* One thing I have to ask you. Leb wohl – *tut als ob er gehen wollte, und kehrt wieder um:* Eins muß ich doch fragen."
[107] Translation:
"ANGELO You ride before. Go, ride ahead! and don't you turn around for anything!"

Furthermore, and also made quite obvious in the examples above, the authority of executing, ordering and forbidding *turns* clearly presents itself as a gendered one. The prince and his staff, Angelo and Marinelli—not to mention Pirro or Rota, who even carry the spiraling movement within their names—these on stage are, it appears, free to twist and turn—not only with their bodies but, as we have seen, within their logics and speech acts, too. It is not a coincidence that in German as well as in English, "turning," "spinning" or "reversing" are used to describe physical movement, but also, to express a change in thinking, logical inconsistency, and, in transitive structures, the act of being persuaded and coaxed, and being made to accept new convictions.

But then—and especially considering this entanglement of activity and passivity, of physical movement and metaphors, of persuasion of the body and change of thought—what does this have to do with the *figure Emilia*? Why do I insist on the connection between the turning and *her* body? If movement is written onto bodies, and if bodies are written and performed as gendered—is there perhaps a quite special set of problems that arises once *she* turns around, perhaps *all by herself*, unauthor(iz)ed, unordered? And is all of this perhaps related to the initial fail of Emilia's citation?

(IV.) Epic Falls

After a very long time of anticipation and the introduction of almost all other dramatis personae, we finally get acquainted with Emilia in person. An instruction as to how *she* needs to be read is given by her mother, who explicitly states: "Ich werde es nie vergessen, mit welcher Geberde du

hereinstürztest." (EG, 317)[108] And neither shall we. Emilia's *entrance* is, as I have laid out, climax to several incidences of her *appearance*, and decides, I argue, what up to that point was left open: the genre of *Emilia Galotti* as dramatic. But why is Emilia's *entrance* such irrevocable indicator of the plays fatal end? How is it that drama is literally *inscribed in her body*?

First of all: Emilia does not *enter* the stage. In fact, the idea of a proper "entrée," derived from the choreography of aristocratic appearance and, at that time, commonly adapted in various performance traditions, such as classical theatre, ballet or opera,[109] gets fundamentally subverted. Emilia "*stürzet*" to the stage, she *falls into* or *onto* it and the stage (in this scene representing her family home) and, more importantly, her mother's presence (and her father's absence) are site of her refuge.

> EMILIA *stürzet in einer ängstlichen Verwirrung herein:* Wohl mir! wohl mir! Nun bin ich in Sicherheit. Oder ist er mir gar gefolgt? *indem sie den Schleier zurück wirft und ihre Mutter erblicket:* Ist er, meine Mutter? ist er? – Nein, dem Himmel sei Dank! (*EG*, 314)[110]

Obviously still marked by another scene that we missed, Emilia's body *falls* onto the stage, bearing visible signs of terror, fear, and confusion. Her body, finally directly accessible by the audience's eye, seems to be completely beside itself, its entire language points towards a drama that must have happened in our absence. This renders the question of presence even more precarious. Emilia's eventual appearance clearly demonstrates the limits of our own presence. She refers to what we

[108] Translation: "Never shall I forget the gesture with which you rushed into this room."
[109] Cf. Matzke, Annemarie, Ulf Otto, and Jens Roselt. *Auftritte. Strategien des In-Erscheinung-Tretens in Künsten und Medien.* transcript Verlag 2015.
[110] Translation:
"EMILIA *dashes into the room, scared and confused:* Oh my! Oh my! Now I am safe. Or did he follow me? throwing back her veil and getting sight of her mother: Did he, Mother? did he? – No, thank Heaven!"

could see—what we *already missed.* This is significant as the constellation thus points towards the limits of the stage's capacity to represent. This leaves the questions: why weren't we invited to the site of this other drama? What is the purpose of learning what happened through Emilia's body alone? How does this constellation of absence participate in making Emilia's body's story unique? How does the absence of the central scene of assault, quite on the contrary, make it somehow representative and such popular material for citation?

I believe a close reading Emilia's teichoscopic account[111] of the scene in church might help the reader to unveil its structural core. Again, I think we need to consider movement and gesture, and the immediate language of the body itself, which, in this case, are brought to language by the body herself. In lieu of stage instructions, the scene requires taking Emilia's words as literally as possible, to track the dramatic movement and the curious spatiality the scene establishes.

> EMILIA Eben hatt' ich mich – weiter von dem Altare, als ich sonst pflege, – denn ich kam zu spät – auf meine Knie gelassen. Eben fieng ich an, mein Herz zu erheben: als dicht hinter mir etwas seinen Platz nahm. So dicht hinter mir! – Ich konnte weder vor, noch zur Seite rücken, – so gern ich auch wollte; aus Furcht, daß eines andern Andacht mich in meiner stören möchte. – Andacht! das war das schlimmste, was ich besorgte. – Aber es währte nicht lange, so hört' ich, ganz nah' an meinem Ohre, – nach einem tiefen Seufzer, –nicht den Namen einer Heiligen, – den Namen, – zürnen Sie nicht, meine Mutter – den Namen Ihrer Tochter! – Meinen Namen! – O daß laute Donner mich verhindert hätten, mehr zu hören! – Es sprach von Schönheit, von Liebe – Es klagte, daß dieser Tag, welcher mein Glück mache, – wenn er es anders mache – sein Unglück auf immer entscheide. – Es beschwor mich – hören mußt' ich dies alles. Aber ich blickte nicht um; ich wollte tun, als ob ich es nicht hörte. – Was konnt' ich sonst? – Meinen guten Engel bitten, mich mit Taubheit zu schlagen; und wann auch, wann auch auf immer! – Das bat ich; das war das einzige, was ich beten konnte. Endlich ward es Zeit, mich wieder zu erheben. Das heilige

[111] Two important elements distinguish Emilia's narration from a classic teichoscopy: her position (on the same or a lower level than the other characters on stage) and the temporality of the account (lack of concurrence).

> Amt gieng zu Ende. Ich zitterte, mich umzukehren. Ich zitterte, ihn zu erblicken, der sich den Frevel erlauben dürfen. Und da ich mich umwandte, da ich ihn erblickte –
> CLAUDIA Wen, meine Tochter?
> EMILIA Raten Sie, meine Mutter; raten Sie – ich glaubte in die Erde zu sinken – Ihn selbst. (*EG*, 315)[112]

The excess of motional, emotional, and affective information within this account (not to mention the synaesthetic surplus any variation of its performance would generate) is impressive. Emilia tells the story of her assault in detail, and that means as choreographic event, as a succession of movement. The essence of the disturbance of her pre-marital penance ritual is, as becomes increasingly clear, realized as fateful incongruence between different choreographic demands and spatial constraints imposed on Emilia's body.

The religious ritual—*kneeling down and lifting the heart* ("auf meine Knie gelassen"/ "mein Herz zu erheben")—organizes Emilia's movement strictly on a vertical level. Also, the ritual predetermines the duration of the scene, as she is only free to *lift up again* ("mich wieder zu erheben") when the mass is over, and the ritual suggests it is time to do so ("Zeit, mich wieder zu erheben"). The verticality of the church ritual, I argue, establishes a spatial analogy to the theatrical

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[112] Translation:
"EMILIA I only just had – further away from the alter than usual, – as I'd come late – kneeled down. Just as my heart started to lift: as something took its seat right behind me. So close behind me! I could not shift back nor forth, nor to the side, as much as I had wanted to; afraid, that someone else's prayer might disrupt my own. – Devotion! it was the worst thing I suspected. But it did not take long, and I heard – so close to my ear – after a deep sigh – not the name of a saint, but the name – do not be angry with me, dear mother – the name of your daughter! My name! Oh, if only some loud thunder had made me deaf to the rest! – It talked about beauty, about love – it mourned that this day, crowning my happiness, – if it shall happen – would seal the fate on his misery forever. It conjured me – I had to hear all of it. But I did not turn around; I wanted to pretend as though I did not hear. – What else was I supposed to do? Pray that my guardian angel would make me deaf; even if it were forever! – That is what I prayed for; it was the only thing I could pray for. Finally, it was time to get up. The service ended. I trembled to turn around. I trembled to see him, he, who had dared to misbehave like that. And as I turned around, as I laid eyes on him –
CLAUDIA Whom, my daughter?
EMILIA Guess, my mother; guess – I thought I should have sunken down into the earth – himself."

realm and the stage, with an architectural organization similarly constricting and reminiscent of theatre's origins in religious ceremony. Entering the stage, generally described as act of "getting up,"[113] here is—in both, the performed scene ("*Emilia stürzt*") as well as in the narrated sequence ("auf meine Knie gelassen") reversed. Emilia's corporeal entrance presents her body as drawn to earth, she is somebody who has *fallen*, which already heralds her body's fate which, at the end of the play, will softly give into gravity's natural force: *sie stirbt, und er legt sie sanft auf den Boden* (*EG*, 370).

The prince and the advances he makes add to the spatial force Emilia's body is subjected to, though the space he commands differs. It is located on a horizontal level and brought about through explicit acts of taking up space. Emilia perceives his presence as *close* ("dicht hinter mir"), *too close* ("So dicht hinter mir!"), and as unwelcome transgression of her space from behind. Tellingly, she does, at first, not speak of the prince as a person but as object, as "It" ("Es"), as unwanted and disturbing presence of some*thing*. "It" *immobilizes her* ("Ich konnte weder vor, noch zur Seite rücken, – so gern ich auch wollte") and talks to her from behind, making it impossible for her to ignore what she hears ("hören mußt' ich dies alles"). In detail, she reports "its" words ("Es sprach von Schönheit, von Liebe […]"), the tone in which they were said ("Es beschwor mich") and even exclusively affective utterances ("nach einem tiefen Seufzen") back to her mother. While for the duration of the mass, *Its* presence had successfully kept Emilia "still"—unable to move or to speak, subject to the external forces— the presence of her body in all its sensibility has made it subject to citation. As she readily confesses to her mother: "[N]icht den Namen einer Heiligen, den Namen, zürnen Sie nicht, meine Mutter – den Namen Ihrer Tochter! – Meinen Namen!"— her

[113] Cf. Vogel, Juliane. "Sinnliches Aufsteigen. Zur Vertikalität des Auftritts auf dem Theater," *Auftritte. Strategien des In-Erscheinung-Tretens in Künsten und Medien.* transcript, 2015, pp. 105-119.

own name is what she hears, and what her body reacts to, what allows her to perceive her presence, her own, undeniable sensual corporeality.

(V.) Peri Peteia

Emilia Galotti's stage instructions are, I argued in the beginning, reduced—and, as her eventual entrance and this first scene epitomize—indeed reduced to their *dramatic* essence. Lessing, as we have seen, introduces Emilia introducing herself as subject to a vertical and horizontal coordinate system that works towards her immobilization: Emilia's body is beset with irreconcilable choreographic demands. Her movement, set at the center of this coordinate system, at the pivotal point of the scene, and narrated entirely by her—her *turning around*—is, in that sense, an attempt to break out. Indeed, this *turn* ("Und da ich mich umwandte, da ich ihn erblickte –") reads as her body's very first authentic movement, as it is not prescribed (by stage instruction), ordered (by another character on stage) or performed *on* her by someone else altogether (as in the case of the portrait). It is, however, simultaneously her *downfall* ("ich glaubte in die Erde zu sinken"), it is, where *everything changes: "peri piptein," around she falls*. With Emilia, Lessing seems to reverse the Aristotelian metaphor of dramatic peripeteia back to its literal—that is figurative—meaning. He personifies them *through* Emilia, by inscribing the movements into her body, making her motor and essence of dramatic action.

But to what end? Why is it, from that moment on, the moment of her *body's entrance*, that Emilia's fate, as I argued in the beginning, is decided? Emilia's first scene unfolds, as we have seen, actually as simultaneity of *two* scenes: the one developed between Emilia and Claudia on stage, and

the *other* one, an absent one, formed in our minds. Evidently, the narrated scene focalizes *her* perception, *her* senses, *her* body's (re)action—while simultaneously featuring *her* body, *her* voice, *her* movement on stage to do so. I argue that this overlap of absent and present scene reveals how Emilia herself is *double*, how her body opens the level of meta-theatrical surplus. She is Emilia, but she is also Emilia's *actress*: she is protagonist of her account, but she also *is* the account, she is performing it. Emilia's movement is, I argue, that of a permanent *turn* between her and *her*, her as person of flesh and movement, *her* as actress performing through text she is given. Through the event in church, Emilia experiences an epic moment in which the simultaneity of experiencing (erleben) and performing (zeigen) collide: she realizes her body in all its alienated restrictedness, she feels its suggestibility and its receptiveness to instruction. She realizes her—theatrical—body as a body whose movements and desires are determined by choreographic demands of the setting and who is affected by the words it is made subject to. Emilia already clearly senses that she is not immune to seduction, but on the other hand able—and required—to pretend. Most importantly: to pretend not to be seduced at all. Both restriction and resistance to *It* are thereby documented in her body's movement, as it is the sole intersection between absent and present scene, and also between action and affect.

Conclusion? No.

The fact that the narrated scene culminates—that is: breaks off—with Emilia *turning around* and facing "it" is significant, as within this turn, several layers of its functions come together. For one, it marks Emilia's decided break with a fourth wall and her epic suspension of the voyeur's power

in an act of literal confrontation. The turn has a revealing effect: "it" becomes a person; the source of the instruction/seduction is identified. The identification of the prince is exactly what leads Claudia to undermine her daughter's initial instinct of sharing the incident with the patriarchs: father or fiancé. Knowing that it was the prince who made advances at Emilia, Claudia seeks to argue away the incident by reinterpreting her daughter's account of what happened as misunderstanding, based on her inexperience with certain rhetoric practices. Claudia's reference to that *other* discourse, however, willfully neglects Emilia's much more existential trouble, which, I argue, is yet another thing the turn signifies and refers to. Within this turn, Emilia experiences herself as multiple, as body, as someone who desires, as someone who reacts to words, whose convictions and feelings diverge, as someone who is not at one with herself.

This is where it gets complicated, and interpretation, especially when questioning Emilia's agency, becomes difficult. As the developments within the plot show, Emilia's problem does not lie entirely in rhetorical misunderstanding or even the prince's transgression per se. Both, misunderstanding and transgression, presuppose clear definitions while Emilia's real trouble seems to be rooted in the exact absence of such clear definitions or boundaries when it comes to her own body—especially in its interaction with other bodies. Her trouble lies precisely within the experience of herself as *moved* by this *other* kind of language and in the realization that, to some degree, she, too, is—and even may want to be—part of that discourse. She recognizes herself as ambiguous, as someone who switches between different levels of authenticity, as someone who is irreconcilably *multiple*.

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Any attempt of clarifying, once and for all, *Emilia Galotti*'s "meaning" would mean an arrest of the heroine's body, would mean belying its inner dramatic movement, written onto and into that body itself. It is no coincidence, that Emilia's and her play's volatility extend to the history of reception and interpretation. In her summary of roughly 250 years of *Emilia*-interpretations, Monika Fick reveals, even in the choice of her own metaphors, how Emilia's twists and turns affect its readers way beyond the text:

> Jeder Satz des Dramas ist hundertfach um- und umgewendet worden, jede These hat die Antithese herausgefordert, jede Argumentationskette hat ihre Widerlegung durch einen gegensinnigen Begründungszusammenhang gefunden.[114]

In contrast to these metaphors of instability, flexibility and ambiguity, poor Odoardo, famously got diagnosed—by Lessing himself—with utmost *inflexibility* regarding his convictions, and "Halsstarrigkeit der Tugend."[115] Might it be his stiff neck exactly, the inability to turn around and change perspectives as well as his categorical nonacceptance of ambiguity that disallows him from coming to terms with his turning, moving, acting daughter? Is his so often debated "motive" for the murder perhaps exactly the opposite of "motive," his absolute lack of motility? As he does not see through his own daughter, he at least has to immobilize her, it seems, to fix her body's meaning down to one: dead, murdered, but still and safe from ambiguous sensations any seduction would cause.

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[114] Fick, Monika. *Lessing-Handbuch. Leben - Werk - Wirkung.* Metzler, 2000, p. 317.
[115] Lessing in a letter to Nicolai on November 28 1756. – Lessing, *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden: Band 11/1 Briefe von und an Lessing 1743 – 1770*, p. 130.

Even after her death, he wants to see his daughter as perfect unity and remains the advocate for purity and clean separation: "Nein, dein Blut soll mit diesem Blute ich nicht mischen."[116] (*EG*, 371). Also, he rejects any confusion with the theatrical realm, what he calls "eine schale Tragödie"[117] (*EG*, 371), and needs the events to be interpreted unambiguously, demanding juridical clarification instead: "Ich gehe, und erwarte Sie, als Richter."[118] (*EG*, 371) While a juridical approach to the event (and its reclassification as "case") would indeed aim towards the elimination of all ambiguity by identifying perpetrator(s) and victim, my reading of the play—which is reading it *as* dramatic play, as choreography, as dramatic essay on the body and its contradictive movement—defies, I think, any such logics of judgment. For what stiff-necked Odoardo does not see is that his rejection of ambiguity leads him to the rejection of his daughter as inconsistent, ambiguous, as human being. It also misses Emilia's strange turn towards activity. She turns around, falls and dies, yes, but she also emerges out of the play as heroine, who has reversed the logics she was subjected to. In the last scene, we can observe Emilia, skillfully applying "die Sprache der Galanterie"[119] herself, perfectly performing the language of verbal seduction, coaxing her father into killing her. She has become author and actress in one: instructing, citing, moving. She, throughout the play subject to instruction, citation and choreographic demands, *turns around* (faces director, prince, audience, Kommissar) and reverses the direction of staged instruction.

[116] Translation: "No, your blood shall not mix with such as hers."
[117] Translation: "a vapid tragedy."
[118] Translation: "I am going, and I'll expect you as my judge."
[119] Translation: "the language of gallantry."

Chapter II: Filming Gestures

Der Filmemacher ist dazu verurteilt eine *Pseudophysis* zu inszenieren.[120]
(Roland Barthes, "Das Problem der Bedeutung im Film")

Film "As" Gesture?

"*By the end of the nineteenth century*," Giorgio Agamben commences chapter five of his *Notes On Politics*, "*the Western bourgeoisie had definitely lost its gestures*."[121] The onset of modernity, as summed up by Agamben, presents itself as quest for something that, to all appearances, had become precarious: the—presumably lost— "naïve" bourgeois gesture. His evidence, as though to disprove anybody who would, at that point, suspect a metaphorical usage of the term "gesture," is a collection of examples of textual and photographic studies on actual gestural behavior, on "bearing" and "the gait," for instance, which, as Agamben suggests, accumulate noticeably around that time. Agamben cites people such as Georges Gilles de la Tourette, neurologist, or Eadweard Muybridge, pioneer of filmic documentation, to show how, by the end of the 19th century and within the emergence of a distinctively scientific apparatus, the gesture becomes an issue: it emerges as research area, a scientific field of study.

In my previous chapter I showed that an interest in the gestural body and even its precise functionalization—for artistic, disciplinary or educational means, as in the form of (stage) instructions—date back to earlier periods. The same holds true for gestures' conceptualization within scientific and medical discourse, as, already in the early 17th century, books devoted entirely

[120] Barthes, Roland. "Das Problem der Bedeutung im Film. 1960" *Montage AV*, January 24 2015, pp. 37-45, p. 44.

[121] Agamben, Giorgio. *Means without End: Notes on Politics*. University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 48.

to the gesture show that medicine assumed the human body in its movements, its voluntary and involuntary gestures, as significant.[122] Still, I do agree with Agamben that modern, scientific takes on the gesture differ structurally from pre-modern texts. Locating such structural difference, however, requires a focalization of the developments regarding discursive means, the scientific method, the medium, so to speak, rather than the content. Reading Tourette's or Muybridge's documentations of gestural activity as mere attempts to reclaim a repertoire of bourgeois naturalness as though it had, by the end of the 19th century, just all of a sudden become suspicious, ignores the fact that the critique of gestural *naivité*, or as Agamben puts it, the absence of any "sense of naturalness"[123] has its roots in much earlier times. If nothing else, *Emilia* shows that the assumption of a "natural body," even during the heyday of the bourgeoise epoch, is tied up in a history of its own problematization: bodies have always challenged their discursive articulation.

What has changed since Lessing's *Emilia* though, and what also informs the chapter break at hand, are the available discursive means and their media. I argue that consideration of the development of new scientific methods and, more importantly, new technological possibilities at the end of the 19th century are necessarily to be considered when trying to grapple with historic differences and developments in the treatment of the gesturing body. Agamben's two primary examples for a the distinctively modern and scientific interest in the gesture, Tourette and Muybridge, are, in this regard, interesting. Tourette translated his "footprint method"[124] which he

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[122] Cf. Kendon, Adam. "Current Issues in the Studies of Gesture." *Biological Foundations of Gestures: Motor and Semiotic Aspects: Symposium on Gestures, Cultures and Communication: 3rd International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies: Revised Papers*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986, pp. 23–48.

[123] Agamben, *Means without End*, p. 52.

[124] "An approximately seven- or eight-meter-long and fifty-centimeter-wide roll of white wallpaper was nailed to the ground and then divided in half lengthwise by a pencil-drawn line. The soles of the experiment's subject were then smeared with iron sesquioxide powder, which stained them with a nice red rust color. The footprints that the patient left while walking along the dividing line allowed the perfect measurement of the gait according to various parameters (length of the step, lateral swerve, angle of inclination, etc.)." Agamben, *Means without End,* p. 49.

developed to identify deviations of "normal," that is conscious and controlled gestural activity—which should eventually give the famous syndrome its name[125]—into meticulous descriptions of the movement of a human foot when walking. The produced texts—Agamben quotes them at length—read almost comical, as even movements as simple as one step of the foot, when put to words, become unbearably slow processes.[126] A step that would, in performance, take a fraction of a second, when transformed into analytical verbal description, claims the length of an extensive paragraph.

While Tourette's notes, in all their poetic dimension, miss the brevity and immediacy of the gesture, Muybridge's photographs, taken in isolation, represent the problem of documenting gesture from another angle. Certainly, form and shape of the performing body and a gesture's fleeting momentariness and are perfectly perceivable in photographic stills, yet photos are, quite evidently, incapable of *showing* movement. Muybridge's famous experiments with photographic seriality and pictures in motion, prefigure even more urgently what it is, that is actually missing in terms of scientific documentation of the gesture. Yes, Tourette and Muybridge, are—content wise—exemplary agents within the same endeavor: to document and analyze the body as composition of gestural movements. But the difference in their technological means is what I think matters most, as each of them fail differently, and in their (medium's) own distinct way.

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[125] Aside from his description of the regular human motion sequences, Tourette also created meticulous descriptions of its deviations, in form of spasms, ticks or other pathological mannerisms. The thus documented symptoms were later subsumed as "Tourette syndrome," still known by their first documentarian's name.

[126] Tourette is but one example of distinctively somatoform syndromes and conditions instituted at that time. Other forms, such as hysteria – Agamben merely points to it by omission – also present themselves in distinctively somatic, theatrical and gestural bodies of symptoms, posing considerable challenges to the scientific apparatus and its analytic, analyzing language. As Tourette was a scholar of Charcot's, his findings on gestural deviance needs to be seen in context to his famous mentor's studies. Cf. for instance Teive, Hélio et al.. "Charcot's Contribution To The Study Of Tourette's Syndrome." *Arq Neuropsiquiatr*, Vol. 66, No. 4, 2008, DOI: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/anp/v66n4/v66n4a35.pdf.

I argue that the significance of these experiments of the documentation of bodily movement lies in their expression of a need that has less to do with a longing for lost naturalness, than the desire to perceive, re-present, and—eventually—*create* naturalness in a new and unprecedented way. Without wanting to accuse Agamben of reducing modernity or various forms of modernisms to their curious obsession with restoring naturalness or authenticity, his tale of the demise of bourgeoise culture in its frantic as futile attempt to "*reclaim what it has lost and to record its loss*"[127] is reminiscent of other narratives written on and around that time. Not least to circumvent a discussion of naturalness and authenticity when it comes to gestures or the body (and to involuntarily engage and uphold binaries the previous chapter has established as problematic), I suggest a reconsideration of the mono-directionality of Agamben's argument and shift focus to the novelty of the medium, film, and film's ability to engage (with) bodies on a different level.

Emphasizing discontinuity rather than tradition, does of course not mean disregarding the question of how and why the new medium was anticipated and came into being, how it relates and emerges out of old media, and what role it plays in the presumed urge to find, trace and document, perhaps, something perhaps indeed irreducibly physiological. Rather, I will argue that viewing film as something radically new, especially with regards to its gestural documentation and analysis, allows us to understand how, through its interplay with film, the very concept of a "natural body" gets overturned yet again. I will not assume a seamless union of flesh and celluloid: much rather it is the disidentification, resistance and incongruence *between* body and apparatus that the following analyses aim to investigate.

[127] Agamben, *Means without End*, p. 52.

Focalizing elements of friction is, I argue, important—especially as, if, as Agamben concludes "*[t]he element of cinema is gesture,*" any study on "filmic gestures" would ab initio be rendered superfluous. Studying gestures in film as filmic gestures would necessarily end up a tautological endeavor and one would merely study the medium, by gesture, pointing to itself. Rather than accepting a mono-directional causal relationship between gesture and film, fueled by a quest for lost naturalness, or even claiming an elementary identity between two media, I will, for now and the following chapter, assume the relationship between film and gesture as not yet given.

Not least to challenge any such generalizing arguments, the chapter focalizes specific films, film makers and film actors and their particular bodies, respectively, to find out what bodies *on* film do *to* film and vice versa—in their scientific isolation (as Agamben, following Tourette and Muybridge, considers them) less so than in artistic context. For whether or not it was the scientific focus on bodily movement that demanded an apparatus capable of such precise documentation: the constellation of body and apparatus, and its hybrid, body-on-film, has unfolded a history whose co-constitutive nature is all but easy to untangle.

1+1) Film As Constellation

Evidently, there is no such thing as "film," there are only films. The diversity within a medium which, since the development of the first filmic apparatus in 1888, has gone through countless phases and technological innovations and spans a vast variety of genres, can hardly be subsumed under one term. Yet, to further investigate the relation between gesture and film, I will be concentrating on three particular films, which, by themselves, but especially in combination, I

think deliver direct insights on the medium's engagement with the human body and its gestures. Just as *Emilia*'s direction of the body was not "representative" but relevant by specificity and through its (introduction of a) volatile position *in-between*, these three films are important in their particularity, and as markers of a historic in-between, too. The three films will thus be introduced as constellation—a figure which, I argue, holds specific importance. For film, as I hope to show, is what happens *in between* constellations of particular kinds.

1+1=3

The formula of film, famously attributed to Jean Luc Godard, is irrational: it has one plus one equal three. "1+1=3": albeit never uttered in that precise way[128]—and even reversed entirely by Godard decades later,[129] the formula has become somewhat proverbial and circulates as mathematical aphorism in film theory. But what does it mean, exactly? At the risk of functionalizing a statement that had perhaps been intended as mere self-reflection, I suggest that this formula indeed structurally applies to film on a number of levels—provided that, and here I argue for an amendment of the formula—provided that 1≠1, that *one does not *quite* equal one*.

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[128] Klaus Theweleit quotes J. L. Godard in an interview on his 1968 film *1+1* saying: "Mich interessierte es damals, alles zweizuteilen. [...] Das war eben das Thema. Auf einer Seite One, die Rolling Stones, und ich ihnen gegenüber. Das machte one plus one, eins und eins, das ist der Versuch zwei zu machen. Und dann habe ich erst hinterher gemerkt, dass es etwas gibt, das das Mehr oder Weniger zwischen zweien ist. Es gibt niemals nur zwei. Es gibt drei oder was anderes, aber immer drei." Translation: "At the time, I was interested in splitting everything into two. [...] That happened to be the subject. On the One side, the Rolling Stones, and me, across from them. That equals one plus one, that is the attempt to make two. And I only realized later, that there is something that is more or less between two. There are never just two. There are three, or something else, but always three." Theweleit, Klaus. *Buch Der Könige*. Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1996, p. 246.

[129] During his press conference at the 2018 Cannes film festival, Godard reformulated "the key to cinema" by claiming: "X+3=1, c'est la clé du cinema." Cf. Emmanuel, Laurent. "'Un Film, C'est x + 3 = 1': L'improbable Conférence De Presse De Godard." *Capital.fr*, 12 May 2018, URL: www.capital.fr/lifestyle/un-film-cest-x-3-1-limprobable-conference-de-presse-de-godard-1287662.

Film, I suggest, is ("=") a "third" ("3") that consists of repetition and difference, it comes into being —that is: perception—by means of seriality ("+") of single elements ("1"), provided that these singles relate to each other, but differ ("1≠1").

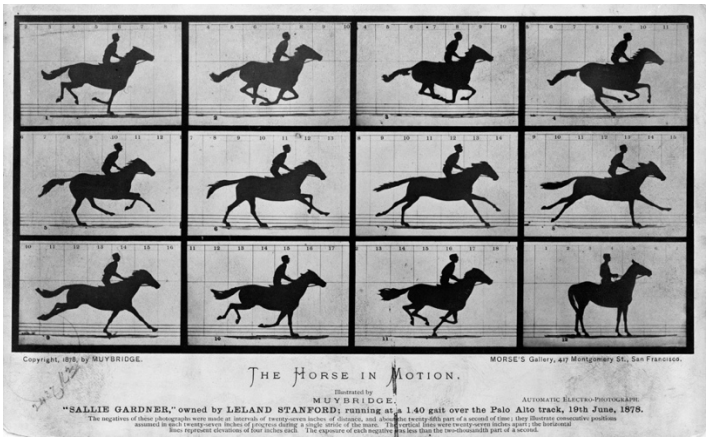
One plus one: the accuracy of the mathematical metaphor can be illustrated by the very beginnings of analogue film and its precedents in serial photography. As Agamben did, one can return to precursors of film such as Eadweard Muybridge and his experiments on photographic seriality, or other pioneers of filmmaking such as chronophotographer Etienne Maray—not only, as Agamben does, in order to look for pre-filmic documentations of gestures, and to understand the scientific eye's affinity to the moving body, but, on a structural level. Indeed, these photographic experiments illustrate how film is (or will be) generated through *seriality* and succession on the one hand, and subtle *difference* and nuance within the respective serial parts on the other. In this regard, Muybridge's and Maray's experiments with what would retrospectively be considered "film's atoms", photographic stills, illustrate how as few as two slightly unequal photographic images, following each other in quick succession, in collaboration with the human brain create something third: film.

Maray's and Muybridge's simultaneous work on the "most vexing question in animal mechanics" [130]—whether horses, when galloping, do, at any point, lose all contact to the ground—is well known and often cited as proof for film's unique ways of expanding our scientific understanding as well as our aesthetic perception.[131] With the help of an expanded apparatus, the

[130] Prodger, Phillip. "The Romance and Reality of the Horse in Motion." *Marey / Muybridge, Pionniers Du cinéma: Rencontre Beaune/Stanford: Actes Du Colloque, 19 Mai 1995, Palail Des congrès, Beaune*. Edited by Joyce Delimata and Bernard Scholl. Conseil régional De Bourgogne, 1996, pp. 44–59, p. 45.

[131] With regards to the question of human bodies on and in film, also lesser known experiments of serial- and chronophotography are of interest. Marey's and Demenÿ's collaboration on using chronophotography to better understand the thermodynamics of the human body and, in consequence, to revolutionize the standard program for physical education in the training of soldiers, illustrates how making bodies accessible and perceivable in that new way,

cinematic projector, film brings forth one of the human body's most serendipitous deficiencies: the eye's (the brain's, the body's) *persistence of vision,* as it is through the human body's incapability to make out images following in rapid succession *as* singles, that film enters perception, comes into being.



"The Horse in Motion" by Eadweard Muybridge.[132]

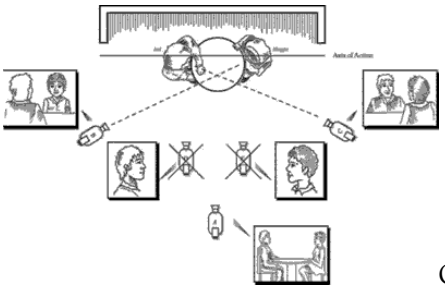
One plus one: the logic pertains when we leave behind these prefilmic experiments, zoom out of the collage of filmic atoms, and fast forward in history to film the way we know it: as combination of multiple of these serial images, as a series of cuts connecting a series of sequences. In any such more advanced forms of film, films that have motion sequences follow each other—and may tell

had immediate influence on body politics. Cf. Braun, Marta. "Marey and Demenÿ: the Problems of Cinematic Collaboration and the Construction of the Male Body at the End of the 19th Century." *Marey / Muybridge, Pionniers Du cinéma: Rencontre Beaune/Stanford: Actes Du Colloque, 19 Mai 1995, Palail Des congrès, Beaune*. Edited by Joyce Delimata and Bernard Scholl. Conseil régional De Bourgogne, 1996, pp. 72–81.

[132] "Eadweard Muybridge." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, URL: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eadweard_Muybridge#/media/File:The_Horse_in_Motion_high_res.jpg.

complicated stories, develop characters, come in different styles, and genres—the magic of the inequation applies, too.

Montage—"the joining together of different elements of film in a variety of ways,"[133] is the next level which uses the formula to its advantage. Sequences of movement shots—different, but related—follow in seriality, again, to create something third. A shot, e.g. of one face, talking, and counter shot, e.g. of another face, responding, in combination, trick the human brain into creating coherence, e.g. of a conversation, and context, e.g. of a situation, of some sense of spatiality. The technique of the functionalized cut (+), often employed in a way that puts it outside of active perception, thus, is the next level of serial, sequential combination of relatable differences that allow for the *perception* of more than the actual *material* of the film itself provides. This particular montage technique, the "collision montage" is associated, most famously, with Sergej Eisenstein's work in which the method, based on the idea that "the mind functions dialectically,"[134] is employed to eventually lead the spectator to a synthetic higher truth. In any case, human body with its sensory receptors and its brain is, again, productive part and integral constituent of the filmic experience.



Classic shot/reverse shot set up.[135]

[133] Rohdie, Sam: *Montage.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006, p. 1.
[134] "Eisenstein and Montage," in Michael Frierson. *Film & Video Editing Theory. How Editing Creates Meaning.* New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 155.
[135] "Shot Reverse Shot: Art of the Guillotine." Taken from Mott, Parker. *The Art of the Guillotine*, www.aotg.com/index.php?page=shotreverseshot.

One plus one: zooming out one final time—and, by that, most likely leaving Godard's intended meaning for good, I will suggest that the filmic formula and the logics of repetition and difference, also apply when considering entire films—finished products—*as constellations*. There is, as I suggested in the beginning, never just "one" film, as, not least because the multitude it already contains and the perceiving bodies it engages. It always relates and answers to others of its kind and each of the serial parts film is made of—material, money, working humans and their bodies—necessarily relates the event of one particular film to other events.[136] In this regard, and to relativize Agamben's all too generic argument of "the element of gesture [being] film", we might say that *an* element of film is gesture—as bodies, in front of the camera and behind, on screen, and watching, are its integral part.

Thinking film as constellation of constellations and dissecting its continuities from its cuts, works especially well when focusing on the reappearance of bodies. Scholars such as Richard Dyer have shown how movie "stars"—actors and actresses through but also apart from their various roles and as recognizable, public personae—contribute in an essential way to the signifying system of a film.[137] This, as my readings will show, is of special importance when trying to separate the physiognomic from the gestural body on screen—the first being bound to relative continuity, the latter, at least potentially, subject to transformation and change. In opposition to written dramatic stage directions whose bodies are, essentially, disposable—Lessing's *Emilia* and the written body she

[136] This may be seen as common place argument, as the idea of a relation to other films informs, at least to some degree, any structural analysis of film. Indeed, all analyses of film that offer more than immanent close readings of a single filmic event make use of it: scholarship on filmic "genres", writings on the "œuvre" of a director or an actor, identifications of filmic "schools" or even historic studies on production houses—etc.: the idea to relate film to film or various of its elements, in order to discuss it, is not new but a structural necessity.
[137] Dyer, Richard, and Paul McDonald. *Stars*. British Film Institute, 1998.

comes with could, potentially, be enacted by a series of replaceable bodies—bodies and film are bodies *on* film, are specific. Especially with the development of narrative and feature film and the emergence of the "movie star"—the role and its gestures were specified, the gesture, in its technologically reproduced publicity, became privatized, iconic. The films I chose, and my subsequent close readings will help us to dissect the physiognomic from the gestural body, as, within the constellation, the involved bodies reappear.

Constellations and Contexts

> [T]he talking picture is idiotic, absurd. The very negation of the cinema.
>
> (Antonin Artaud, 1929)

With a friendly gesture towards Agamben, who located his study on gestures and film in the in-between of the pre-filmic and the filmic era (and the bourgeois and post-bourgeois period), I will focus on another moment of transition—one taking place *within* the medium itself—to re-investigate the relationship between bodies and celluloid. The constellation of three films marks what was, at one point, believed to be the "greatest transformation in film history"[138]—film's transition from silence (or musical score) to (audible dialogue and synchronized) sound.

While, strictly speaking, the development of sound technology for film dates back to the very beginnings of the medium itself, and the "transition" thus really spanned a period of more than three decades,[139] the "crisis"[140] and/or "revolution in film aesthetics"[141] associated with film's integration of synchronized sound, is generally situated during the time of sound technology's international commercial success during the late 1920s. With Hollywood's 1927 release of its first commercial sync-sound feature film, *The Jazz Singer,*[142] the agenda was set, yet, on an international scale, the movement towards sound was heterogenous and controversial, and the various

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[138] Pabst, Georg Wilhelm. "The Reality Of Sound Film." *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*. Edited by Anton Kaes et al.. University of California Press, 2016, pp. 563–564, p. 564.
[139] Gomery, Douglas. "The Coming of Sound: Technological Change in the American Film Industry." *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. Edited by Elisabeth Weis and John Belton. Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 5–24.
[140] Carroll, Noël. "Lang and Pabst: Paradigms for Early Sound Practice." *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. Edited by Elisabeth Weis and John Belton. Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 265–276, p. 265.
[141] Kittler, Friedrich A., and Anthony Enns. *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999*. Polity, 2010, p. 200.
[142] Crosland, Alan, director. *The Jazz Singer*. Warner Bros., 1927.

transitions took on different form in different national cinema cultures and their respective filmic traditions.

Sound Crises

In Germany, or rather, the Weimar republic, the history of cinema's transition to sound was complicated and marked by inner contradictions. On the one hand, it happened, as film scholar Corinna Müller writes, "exceptionally fast,"[143] but, on the other hand, it was met with lots of resistance and accompanied by public mourning of its side effect, the "demise of silent film."[144] Indeed, the US audience's generally welcoming attitude of the advancements towards sound are by no means representative for the developments it triggered throughout the rest of the globe. The three films I chose are from the years 1928 – 1930, and thus fall within those exact years of transition: two of them are silent (or accompanied by a musical score) and were produced in Germany, the third one, a talkie, in France. In all of the three cases the films' European heritage and their situation between silence and sound play an important role.

It is not a coincidence that the transition to sound throughout these years coincided with Hollywood's hegemonic rise within the international film business, as the engagement of synchronized sound firstly hinged on technological means and possibility. However, and as especially many European film makers would insist, the engagement of sound technology—at least *also*—needs to be understood as artistic choice. The fact that the pressure issued by Hollywood made the implementation of sound quasi mandatory, was perceived as part of a larger

[143] Müller Corinna. *Vom Stummfilm Zum Tonfilm*. Fink, 2003, p. 24.
[144] Ibd., p. 12.

development within the film industry, and it was certainly not welcomed by everyone. Weimar cinema is primary example in these regards. It had, since its beginnings after the war, achieved international success and enjoyed, especially within the European context, the reputation of "mak[ing] commercial films in the best sense of the word," and delivering work "of high technical and artistic quality, [...] very human, and extremely saleable."[145] With good reason, Berlin prided itself being Hollywood's complement, its inspiration, and, at one point, perhaps its only serious competition,[146] a power dynamic that was, by the end of the 1920s visibly beginning to shift. Tellingly, Berlin was, in the late inter-war period, still immensely prolific in the production of silent films and, in many cases, by choice rather than necessity.

Ofer Ashkenazi, who investigates the introduction of sound film in Germany as movement of forceful "integration,"[147] shows the relative abruptness with which the transition to sound took place in Germany. He also points to the resistance these changes were met with, fueled by a perhaps surprising divergence between popular taste and the demands of the industry. In 1929, just a tiny fraction of German productions—eight out of 183 feature films in total[148]—employed sound-recording. Various surveys held at that time reveal that an overwhelming majority of German moviegoers would prefer silent versions over sound films, which, according to Ashkenazi, cannot be entirely attributed to the imperfections of the sound technology available in the first

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[145] Philippon, Henri. "Antonin Artaud Tells Us About German Cinema." *Collected Works Antonin Artaud.* By Antonin Artaud and translated by Alastair Hamilton. Calder and Boyars, 1972, pp. 88–89.
[146] About the relationship between Weimar and Hollywood cinema, film historian Saunders states that "[a]fter the war Germany was the one nation which could pretend to present a European answer to Hollywood," and that "[f]or a fleeting moment in the first half of the postwar decade it even appeared to mount a frontal assault on American hegemony." Cf. Saunders, Thomas J. *Hollywood in Berlin. American Cinema and Weimar Germany.* University of California Press, 1994, p. 6.
[147] Ashkenazi, Ofer. "'A New Era of Peace and Understanding': The Integration of Sound Film in German Popular Cinema, 1929–1932." *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*, by Christian Rogowski, Camden House, 2012, pp. 249–267.
[148] Kaes, Anton, et al.. *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*. University of California Press, 2016, p. 563.

years of its introduction. This corresponds with Müller's finding, that, in Germany, a few silent film cinemas would continue to operate up until the mid 1930s, complicating the question of the transition's successful completion.[149] Any such acts of anachronistic resistance are, of course, in no way representative for the developments seen on a larger scale; obviously, the triumph of sound cinema, even in Germany, was inevitable. Within only one year, the statistics for Germany changed considerably. Had, in 1929, roughly 4% of German productions recorded sound, in 1930, and due to the pressure to compete with of the international industry, more than 90 percent of all German productions employed sound, often recording in multiple language versions at the same time.[150]

Silent Revolutions

For the purpose of my investigations, a preference for silent film is, perhaps, not all too surprising. Considering the format's dependence on bodies expressing not only themselves but also characters, stories, plots and meaning, makes silent films an important and rich archive of gestures. Weimar and other European filmmakers, as well as the audience's continued favoring of the silent format, and the wide rejection of sound film, is, however, noteworthy. But what is it that makes the "talking picture [...] idiotic, absurd"[151]—and why was the transformation of the medium

[149] Müller, *Stummfilm*, p. 24.
[150] Cf. Ashkenazi, "A New Era," p. 250.
[151] The entire quote, in abridged version cited at the beginning, is taken from a letter Artaud wrote to Yvonne Allendy in response to her request for his collaboration on a talkie and reads: "Dear friend, 1. To make a talking picture now, or at any time, seems wrong to me. The Americans who have staked everything on it are preparing a very sinister future for themselves, as are all companies which produce bad films on the pretext that they are more saleable; the talking picture is idiotic, absurd. The very negation of the cinema." Artaud, Antonin. *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. Calder & Boyars, 1972.

vehemently rejected by an entire number of artists and intellectuals—especially those not otherwise known for a conservative approach to new media?

Antonin Artaud's 1929 condemnation of sound film, which he dismisses as "talking picture," is, also in its polemic tone, representative for an entire movement of artists and filmmakers opposing the developments within the industry.[152] The skepticism against the transition to sound was widespread, particularly among European film makers, theorists, and intellectuals. The prose the anti-sound sentiment inspired, cultivates, at times, an almost manifesto-like tone in which critique of capitalism and its standardizing consumer culture, anti-Americanism, and artistic concerns merge.[153] Such cultural pessimism and the grief over the loss of an era when, allegedly, "serious people made serious films"[154] was not just expressed by the infamous Walter Ruttmann, who ended up collaborating with the Nazis, but even by those, who like a number of Russian filmmakers, later became known for their successful attempts to work with the new medium and to implement sound in a non-conformist way.[155] This certainly illustrates the challenge lying within clearly separating artistic and political lines of argumentation in this debate. Adding to the fact that, in Germany, the demise of silent film coincided with massive political turnover and eventually the downfall of the Weimar Republic complicates the problem further.

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[152] Cf. Paraskeva, Anthony. *The Speech-Gesture Complex: Modernism, Theatre, Cinema*. Edinburgh University Press, 2013, p. 134.
[153] Cf. for instance Marcus, Laura, et al. *Close Up: Cinema And Modernism*. Continuum, 1998. URL: search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=306573&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
[154] Ruttmann, Walter. "Prinzipielles zum Tonfilm." *Filmliga [Onafhankelijk Maandblad Voor Filmkunst]*, Vol. 3. November 1 1929, DOI: https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_fil001film01_01/_fil001film01_01_0161.php.
[155] Cf. Elsaesser, Thomas. *Film History as Media Archaeology: Tracking Digital Cinema*. Amsterdam University Press, 2019, p. 156.

While much scholarship has gone into exposing the relationship between politics, propaganda, and film specific to the late Weimar period and into uncovering especially Nazi cinema's use of synchronized sound in film for fascist purposes, more recently, some scholars have also brought forth examples of early German sound film which defied such agendas and used the media in ways opposing political, artistic, or commercial conformism.[156] Current scholarship has aided in revealing the vast diversity within the genre of early German sound film. Acknowledging that "Weimar sound film must be freed from overly limiting frameworks provided by the proximity to the Nazi period, without forgetting about it,"[157] emphasizes the importance of deciding from case to case when working on films produced throughout the final years of the Weimar republic.[158]

It is not in my interest to render any such political debates secondary, however, I did not choose the selection of films based on the degree to which they are or were supportive of the political mainstream, nor will their contributors' political affiliation provide my lens for the close readings. Certainly, the notion of mainstream will come up in a different way, as my interest is to tackle these films between silence and sound with a focus on the aesthetic measures. There is, I argue, a factor in the transition of silence to sound in film, which, especially when solely concentrating on statistics or by contextualizing films with regards to parallel or related developments in politics, is neglected: the role of the body acting, the body in and on "silent" and

[156] Ofer Ashkenazi's essay is an example of this tradition as he discusses films which "[…] were made at the time of the incorporation of sound into the German film industry […] [and] addressed the sense of pervasive crisis head-on and display a sincere, if sometimes desparate, effort to maintain a progressive-liberal society, which was to be based on a free rational individual." Ashkenazi, "A New Era", p. 250ff.
[157] Davidson, Davidson, John E., and Theodore F. Rippey. "Introduction: Early Sound Cinema in the Late Weimar Republic." *Colloquia Germanica*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2011, pp. 233–236.
[158] An example for the artistically challenging use of sound technology would be Fritz Lang who, despite of being the "last prominent German director to make the transition to sound" would, in works such as M, or the *Testament of Dr. Mabuse* show the imaginative force and potential of divergent employment of sound in film. Cf. Kaes, Anton, et al.. *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*. University of California Press, 2016, p. 576f.

sound-synchronized film—a topic that, of course, itself happens to be of political relevance and consequence.

The Bodies Between

A year after Ernst Hugo Correll had become newly appointed director of production at UFA in 1928, where he orchestrated the company's transition to sound technology, he released a statement on "The Nature and Value of Sound Film"[159] which extrapolates that the impact of the transition, which was by no means restricted to the recording of sound itself. Correll meticulously lists how *all* levels of film would be impacted by the introduction of sound, by laying out how screenplays, but also architecture, preparation and design of any filming location, as well as the processes of rehearsing and shooting themselves would be required to react to the introduction of sound.[160] Focusing on the shooting process, Correll's prognoses regarding acting and rehearsal remain short, but to the point:

> The most drastic change will be to the shooting process. Directors must cease providing extensive cues to actors while they are filming. Instead, directing must be carried out in complete silence. This will require a significant lengthening of the rehearsal period. Film actors must get used to practicing with nearly artistic precision. Needless to say, just like stage actors, they will have to memorize their roles meticulously. [...] More than ever before, entire scenes will have to play out without interruptions.[161]

[159] Correll, Ernst Hugo. "The Nature and Value of Sound Film." *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933*, by Anton Kaes et al., University of California Press, 2016, pp. 462–463.
[160] Cf. ibd., p. 562f.
[161] Ibd.

Although Correll, a lateral recruit to the film business who never worked as an actor or director himself, touches upon the implications of the transition to sound for the acting body only peripherally, the implications of these prognoses are significant. Correll first points to the "drastic change" regarding the communicative situation on set while filming, and the director's sudden inability to give "extensive cues". He then lays out the necessity of increased professionalization on the actors' side, in the form of prolonged rehearsal and memorization processes and meticulous role study. Correll's laconic note that actors will eventually be required to work with "nearly artistic precision" reveals his rather depreciative notion of the profession, as though, during the silent film era, pretty much anyone would have been able to act for the camera.

More importantly, Correll's outline of the required constellation during sound film shootings proposes a noteworthy inversion: as sound becomes part of the recording, requiring actors to speak, directors are, at least *in actu* of shooting, forced to remain silent. While silent film allowed for a shared and quasi anarchic sound space on set, sound film recordings demanded discipline, as it commands absolute silence from the vast majority of the assembled bodies on a film set. This allows for the speculation whether the collective lamentation over silent film's demise among Europe's proto-auteurs may, to some degree, have been due to the fact that suddenly they themselves were required to act a certain way, and felt prevented from directing, as they were used to, direct *directly*, which included the privilege to intervene verbally at all times, even while shooting.

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to obtain footage that could illustrate Correll's prognoses or verify continuing speculations. Paratextual footage is almost entirely non-existent, as take outs, cut material, or documentation of rehearsals were, during that time and due to the high

cost of the material, not produced on purpose and, when generated accidentally, rarely considered important enough for the archive. In lieu of such footage, my investigations are based on the material available, the directors' cuts and subjective accounts, leaving the story behind particular movements or gestural expressions (where they rehearsed? were they instructed? were they a product of the actor's extemporaneous improvisation?) subject to interpretation.

The films themselves nevertheless provide ample material to investigate silent and sound film's different treatments of the body, as the comparative close readings shall illustrate. In turn, these readings will help us investigate the reasons for the strong pro or anti-sound sentiments, and also show that these questions are political as they reflect how media and body politics intertwine. Starting with the question if indeed, on a general level, (early) sound film is to be equated with commercialism and easy consumption, my readings close in on single stills and scenes portraying a body, to find out if the developments could indeed be subsumed under terms like standardization, disciplining, and commercialization, and, if so, what exactly that means when it comes to the body on screen. Thus, dissecting political progressivism from artistic conservativism in these debates, and allowing me to focus on the bodies at work, I hope to shed light on the variety and difference within both, the sound and the silent film genre themselves.

Since I will not entirely separate my close readings entirely by film and will not focus on the details of their storylines, there are brief synopses of the three films to be found at the very beginning of each of the analyses. These synopses are added for orientation, and to point to the (narrative) continuity within the constellation I and others have found to be noteworthy. The close readings themselves refrain from presenting plot summaries as to focus on processes in which gestural (dis)continuity, acts of visual rhyming and bodily re-presentation of the same body redirect

the films' story or their narrative "meaning". The three films I chose are *Pandora's Box*[162] (1929), *Diary Of A Lost Girl*[163] (1929), and *Prix de Beauté*[164] (1930).

[162] Pabst, Georg Wilhelm, director. *Pandora's Box*. 1929.
[163] Pabst, Georg Wilhelm, director. *Diary of a Lost Girl*. 1929.
[164] Genina, Augusto, director. *Prix De Beauté*. 1930.

Louise, Lulu: First Glimpses

Imagine Pabst choosing Louise Brooks for Lulu when he could have had *me*![165]

Marlene Dietrich was outraged, and so was the rest of Germany. The year was 1929, and only about half a decade had passed since another German film director had made the attempt to adapt *Lulu*, Frank Wedekind's fragmented drama series centering around the eponymous heroine, to the silent screen. Other than Leopold Jessner's film from 1923, however, Georg Wilhelm Pabst's new adaptation of the drama, *Pandora's Box*, starring Louise Brooks as the notorious Lulu, did not exactly turn out successfully—at least according to its many critical reviews. The initially almost unanimously bad reception of Pabst's film has been of central interest to film scholarship ever since. And indeed, the film's volatile history of reception is noteworthy, for *Pandora's Box* really only advanced to fame and its cult status about three decades after its initial release. Before becoming the emblem of Weimar silent film, *Lulu*, and, more precisely, Louise Brooks *as* Lulu, were subject to critique worthy exploring.

But first, a brief summary of the storyline. In intermittent episodes, the film tells the story of "Lulu" (Louise Brooks), a varieté dancer, who engages in a series of flirts, affairs and romantic liaisons. Her ensemble of temporary lovers is noticeably diverse in terms of class and gender and Lulu herself goes through a range of social statuses. She starts off as dancer and varieté artist but moves up the social latter through her marriage to Dr. Schön, her former lover, whose previous

[165] Marlene Dietrich, quoted by Brooks – cf. Brooks, Louise. *Lulu in Hollywood*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, p. 96.

engagement to the daughter of the prime minister she torpedoes. However, her new bourgeois life ends promptly, as she kills her husband after refusing to commit—as he urges her to—suicide. Accused of murder, Lulu manages to flee the court after she is found guilty and manages to go into hiding in Paris. Her precarious life under a different identity does not last long, as her iconic mug shot is all over the press and she gets blackmailed and threatened to be exposed by several people. Eventually, Lulu has to flee again and sets off to London, where she lives in hiding and abject poverty, before ending up in the arms—and the knife—of Jack the Ripper.

Thomas Elsaesser commences his reading of *Pandora's Box* with an overview of the abundant negative critical reception of the film on both sides of the Atlantic.[166] In his reading, he links the wide rejection primarily to historical contexts within the industry, and he reminds us that factors such as "the large scale emigration of German film-makers to Hollywood" [167], "the economic difficulties of the German film industry after the 1927 crash"[168] as well as "UFA and Nero's bid to break into the American market"[169] are to be considered when discussing the film and its initial reviews. While Elsaesser and others certainly lay out important connections by situating the film in the midst of these historic developments, I would like to draw attention to the particular form and focus of the film's critical reviews which, I argue, reveal a rather curious tendency, a thematic vector so to speak. While the historic contexts within and outside the industry, along with the atmosphere of national resentment to which they contributed, might have fueled the feuilleton's

[166] Cf. Elsaesser, Thomas. "Lulu and the Meter Man." *OUP Academic*, Oxford University Press, July 1 1983, p. 4f., DOI: academic.oup.com/screen/article-abstract/24/4-5/4/1616585.
[167] Elsaesser, "Lulu", p. 2-3.
[168] Ibd., p. 2-3.
[169] Ibd.

critique, almost none of the reviews make these political topics explicit. Rather, the negative critique was directed against a target, ostensibly unrelated to the political debate: the acting (female) body.

Admittedly, the sheer quantity of the critical reviews of *Pandora's Box* challenges the suggestion of a common denominator or thematic vector, as almost all aspects of the film became subject of scrutinization by one review or another. While some critics deemed Wedekind's literary drama and the medium of silent film incompatible per se,[170] others criticized the film's "fantastic" style, reminiscent of and better fit for the post-war era. [171] Some even, curiously, found fault with its "lack of content,"[172] which, considering the complicated plot the film plays out in a series of elaborative acts, is perhaps particularly surprising. What combines almost all of these critical discussions, however, is that they make explicit negative mention of Louise Brooks, the main cast of the film.

There is not a lot of documentation on Pabst's motivation for choosing Louise Brooks, an at that time almost entirely unknown dancer from Kansas with minimal filming experience to play the film's lead character, "Lulu," a literary icon of, as it turned out, *national* relevance. Decades later, Cinémathèque Française founder and leading Brooks-fanboy Henri Langlois would speculate that

> [...] Pabst's choice of an American to play the role must have been determined by his wish to contrast America (perceived as young and innocent, energetic and impulsive: the New

[170] "The film is unable to reproduce the discrepancy between Lulu's outward appearance, and her utterance." A Kraszna Krausz "G W Pabst's Lulu," *Close Up*, April 1929, p. 27.
[171] Cf. Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler*. Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 179.
[172] Harry Alan Potamkin, quoted in Kracauer, Siegfried. *Caligari to Hitler*, p. 179.

> World) with Europe (perceived as old and corrupted, manipulative and morbid: the Old World).[173]

Young, innocent, energetic and impulsive America, brought to the German screen through actress Louise Brooks? Compelling as Langlois' entirely positive image of America and Louise Brooks, assumed on the late Weimar Republic's behalf, may sound—the many voices bemoaning German film's sacrifice of their uniqueness for the sake of a dubious "Americanization" [174] renders his argument precarious. Quite on the contrary, reactions such as those by Marlene Dietrich ("Imagine […]!") indicate that Pabst, by selecting an American dancer to play the part in the film, had committed cultural blasphemy. Certainly, the mere fact that, after an exhaustive and fruitless casting period among German actresses, Pabst elected a foreigner to star as lead in the production, cannot account for the entirety of the critical backlash against Louise Brooks. Yet, she did become target of nationalist and at times rather inarticulate resentment. In her memoirs, written decades later, she still vividly remembers being yelled at during the film's Berlin premiere for playing "*unsere deutsche Lulu.*"[175]

Still, I want to zoom in on the specific form and focus of the critique, for attributing the rejection of Brook's interpretation of Lulu exclusively to—a surely existent—German-nationalist sentiment, falls short. Brooks' account of the incident at the premiere and other expressions of

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[173] Henry Langlois on Louise Brooks, quoted in Wollen, Peter. "BROOKS AND THE BOB - Louise Brooks Is One Of Cinema's Great Icons. But What Makes Her So Special? ." *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Feb. 1994, pp. 22–25, p. 25.
[174] Kracauer famously bemoaned the orientation towards America within German film („Tendenz, den deutschen Film zu amerikanisieren"), which he saw rooted in the attempt to be competitive on an international scale, but which he saw as fundamentally mislead ("Das Ergebnis war erbärmlich"). Cf. Kracauer,. *Von Caligari Zu Hitler: Eine Psychologische Geschichte des Deutschen Films*. Translated by Ruth Baumgarten and Karsten Witte, Suhrkamp, 1984, p. 145.
[175] In her autobiography, Louise Brooks shares some memories on the night of the film premiere: "As we left the theatre […] and Pabst hurried me through a crowd of hostile moviegoers, I heard a girl saying something loud and nasty. In the cab, I began pounding his knee, insisting "What did she say?" Finally, he translated: "That is the American girl who is playing our German Lulu." – Louise Brooks, *Lulu in Hollywood*, Praeger, New York 1982, p. 95.

nationalist outbursts or envy are helpful to understand the culturally charged atmosphere at the time, as well as Louise Brooks' complicated role *in between* that will prove to be important, also with regards to her roles. As McCarthy notes, Brooks was in the precarious position to "straddle a troubled cultural divide between Weimar modernity and a form of Americanization often perceived in feminine terms."[176] That, however, these offensive attacks are not representative for language and impetus of the larger part of the critique, crystallizes when looking at those reviews written by critics who neither harbored personal resentment against Brooks nor could be accused of propagating a nationalist agenda. Indeed, even critics who applauded Pabst's gesture of internationalization and the introduction of foreign talent to the German screen, saw the literary Lulu, Wedekind's "most interesting female character,"[177] and "personification of the female desire" as miscast with, as one reviewer put it, "likeable sportsgirl" Louise Brooks:

> Er [Pabst] hat ein halbes Jahr nach einer geeigneten Schauspielerin gesucht, über tausend Anwärterinnen gefilmt und dann wieder beiseitegestellt und sich schließlich Louise Brooks aus Hollywood geholt. Louise Brooks, jung, herrlich gewachsen, hat vielleicht einen Lulukopf und die Kindlichkeit der Gebärden, die Wedekind vorschwebte. Aber die Unschuld Lulus ist ja nur eine scheinbare: es ist nun einmal so, daß das erotische Fluidum, das von jedem ihrer Glieder ausstrahlt, die Männer zum Wahnsinn und Selbstmord treibt. Von Louise Brooks strahlt nichts aus außer Heiterkeit und Jugend [...] Louise Brooks ist nicht triebhaft, sondern ein ungewöhnlich sympathisches Sportgirl.[178]

This critique from 1929 is representative in its tone and emphasis. While Brooks' "foreignness" or her nationality were still at times, negatively or positively, hinted at—using the term "Sportgirl" [sic]

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[176] McCarthy, Margaret. "Surface Sheen And Charged Bodies. Louise Brooks As Lulu In Pandora's Box (1929)." *Weimar Cinema: an Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*. Edited by Noah William Isenberg, Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 217–236, p. 222.
[177] "Gestalten Und Darsteller." *Der Film: Illustrierte Film- Und Kinorundschau*, No. 166, 1929, p. 9.

[178] Pol, Heinz. "Die Büchse der Pandora / Lulu im Film." *Vossische Zeitung*, February 12, 1929.

in the framework of a German text could be seen as such subtle form of othering—most attention was given to Louise Brooks' demeanor, her acting style, her particular presence on screen. Brooks, even when, as in the example quoted above, generally appreciated for some of her attributes, was defined by her "lack of x," by what she was, according to the critic, missing. In the review above, it is the lack of a certain aura ("strahlt nichts aus außer,") in others she is accused of "doing nothing and being unable to act,"[179] of only ever "smiling indifferently,"[180] and again and again, of lacking the sex appeal[181] necessary for the part.

These many comments on her alleged "impassivity" reveal their irony especially when considering Pabst's own assessment of Wedekind's character. To him, Lulu's character consists of a "lack of x;" a lack of perceptible character traits, and a certain impassivity. To Pabst, Lulu is "not a real character but the personification of primitive sexuality who [...] plays a purely passive role."[182] Louise Brooks might have succeeded in realizing her director's vision of the character, the feuilleton could not be swayed. Pabst might indeed have been trying to "move beyond Expressionism, to create a 'modern' cinema" [183] by casting Brooks, but this portrayal of a more complicated form of female sexuality—Louise's "gleaming eyes" instead of Marlene's "thighs"[184]—was seen as miscast, and Louise's interpretation of the role repeatedly described as distortion of Wedekind's literary template.

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[179] Cf. a collection of contemporary critical voices, quoted in Spiegel Online. "STARS: Heiße Hummel." *DER SPIEGEL 30/1983*, SPIEGEL ONLINE, 24 July 1983, URL: www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-14018435.html.
[180] "ihre lächelnde Interesselosigkeit" – in "Wedekinds 'Lulu' Im Film/ Der Fall Der Verwitweten Frau Schön." *Der Film Der Weimarer Republik Ein Handbuch Der zeitgenössischen Kritik*, by Gero Gandert, De Gruyter, 1993, p. 88.
[181] "Es fehlt ihr an der Gewalt des Trieblichen und für die Dirne reicht sie nicht aus." – Cf. Kracauer, Siegfried. "Lulu." *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 17 Feb. 1929.
[182] G. W. Pabst, quoted by Brooks – cf. Brooks. *Lulu*, p. 94.
[183] Henry Langlois on Louise Brooks, quoted in Wollen, Peter. "BROOKS AND THE BOB - Louise Brooks Is One Of Cinema's Great Icons. But What Makes Her So Special? ." *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Feb. 1994, pp. 22–25, p. 24.
[184] McCarthy, Margaret. "Surface Sheen And Charged Bodies. Louise Brooks As Lulu In Pandora's Box (1929)." *Weimar Cinema: an Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*, by Noah William Isenberg, Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 217–236, p. 221.

What is significant though is that even in the harshest critiques, Brooks' beauty and the value her body held for the male gaze are nowhere disputed. Even if her acting was declared inept for the role, her looks were praised in many ways, and often functionalized in the advertising of the film. To draw the audience to the cinema, film magazines refrained from posting descriptions of the film or a discussion of its plot, let alone actual (negative) reviews. Instead, the film was announced primarily visually: with oversized portraits of Louise Brooks, almost entirely uncommented film stills, or little, comic-like sketches[185] of her face, openly using her looks, and establishing them as memorable, as iconic.

Announcement: *Mein Film*[186]

Stills: *Der Tag*[187]

Drawings: *Salzburger Volksblatt*,[188] *Das kleine Blatt*,[189] *Mein Film*[190]

[185] For a detailed elaboration of Louise Brook's central position between film and comic, cf. Caneppele, Paolo, and Günter Krenn. *Film Ist Comics: Wahlverwantschafdtschaften Zweier Medien: Die Projektionen Des Filmstars Louise Brooks in Den Comics Von John Striebel Bis Guido Crepax*. Filmarchiv Austria, 1999.
[186] "Louise Brooks als Lulu." *Mein Film*, Vol. 165, 1929. Screenshot by the author.
[187] "Filme von heute und morgen." *Der Tag*, March 1 1929. Screenshot by the author.
[188] "Die Büchse der Pandora." *Salzburger Volksblatt*, March 12 1929. Screenshot by the author.
[189] "Die amerikanische Lulu." *Das kleine Blatt*, March 3 1929. Screenshot by the author.
[190] "Lulu." Mein Film, Vol. 166, 1929. Screenshot by the author.

Considering the commercial functionalization of Brooks' looks and the simultaneous focus of the critique on her demeanor and her gestural presence on screen, her "impassivity" and her "inability to act", there is, I argue, an important process of distinction at work. Without a doubt, both sides of this distinction—the devalorization of her acting and the valorization of her looks—are entirely based in the male gaze and perpetuate sexist language and thought; at times, even cumulating in openly violent phantasies against the body on screen.[191] Still, it makes a difference whether one criticizes someone's *body*, or their *acting*, and separating one from the other automatically contrasts the physiognomic aspect with the gestural. The mere fact that Brooks' *acting*, her mimic art and her movements mobilized such intense resentment, while pictures and images of her were generally met with appreciation and deployed outside cinemas and in magazines for easy consumption, is intriguing. Leaving the attempts to turn her into still advertisements behind, at least for now, I propose to take a look at Brooks' gestures and movements throughout the film, to find out why they triggered such strong reactions.

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Pandora's Box famously opens with a scene between the meter man and—Lulu. The first glimpse of Louise Brooks 1929 German moviegoers would have caught—paratextual advertisements such as the ones quoted above, aside—is this: a figure shot of her, entering through a door.

[191] "Sie strampelt mit ihren höchst bemerkenswerten Beinen wie ein kleines ungezogenes Kind, und man hat das Gefühl, nun müßte ihr Dr. Schön eine Ohrfeige hauen, damit das Kind endlich aufhört, sich unartig zu benehmen. Statt dessen reagiert er ganz anders, was man durchaus nicht begreift." Translation: "She is kicking her most remarkable legs like a naughty child and one gets the feeling that Dr. Schön better slaps her in the face so that the child stops the unruly behavior. Instead, he responds quite differently, which is certainly hard to understand." Pol, Heinz. "Die Büchse der Pandora / Lulu im Film." *Vossische Zeitung*, February 12, 1929.

(Lulu's entrance 1/2/3)[192]

In exactly three brief seconds—the shot of an already opened door, a woman, appearing while looking for something in her purse, her face held down and covered by hair, finally, looking up, revealing her face for a split second—a new Lulu is introduced to the screen. Brooks' looks somewhat reference the earlier filmic adaptation by Jannings and Asta Nielsen's styling in same role—which some critics explicitly noted, generously praising Brooks' haircut, implying that her correct interpretation of the "Lulukopf" [193] marks one of the actress' few modest achievements. But Louise Brooks' looks, as laid out, were never perceived as problematic. But then, what was?

The movement sequence of the entrée, Louise's first appearance, is brief, and the quick montage only allows us less than a second to meet the new face. Lulu enters the room and the German cinema screen with a sense of momentariness that, as I argue, couldn't make her presence more precarious, in terms of time, but even more so in terms of subjective attention. On both ends, her brief appearance is framed by longer shots of the meter man, working the electricity meter; at first, significantly, without becoming aware of Lulu's sudden presence. She enters and looks up, as she notices the meter man. The audience's first glimpse of Lulu's face (her, looking up) thus happens simultaneously with her, spotting the meter man. He, the meter man, only

[192] "Lulu's entrance 1/2/3." *Pandora's Box*. Screenshots by the author.
[193] "Louise Brooks hat vielleicht einen Bubikopf [...]" – cf. Pol, "Büchse der Pandora."

catches sight of her too late: *after* she has already gained visual control over the setting. She is the one who comes up to him.

Such a constellation of visual axes between a man and a woman, are, especially for a first scene, highly unusual. This is not how the introduction of lead female protagonists works. Female leads do not *see* before they are seen—quite on the contrary: they are the ones to be spotted first, they are the ones who get caught in the act, who are to be surprised, whose being-looked-at-ness takes on primary function within narrative film.[194] Ideally, the act of a first sight of a female lead, happens while she is completely unaware of the fact that she is being subject to someone's (including the apparatus') gaze: ideally, *his* identification *of her* is what makes her come into being. Yet here, the structure is reversed: it is she, Lulu, who discovers him first, who catches him, the meter man, by surprise. And with the meter man the moviegoer. The audience, too, is taken aback by the sudden, completely unceremonious and precariously brief entrée and first appearance of the heroine.

Indeed, in many ways, the—regarding the plot structure entirely dispensable—meter man can be seen as avatar for the moviegoer, and the fact that he is denied any form of voyeurism heralds the challenge the film will be posing to the male gaze. As neither he, the meterman, nor we, the audience, are granted even a moment of voyeurism during Lulu's first appearance, a pattern of incessant dissatisfaction is set in motion. The initial scene establishes a masterly practice of what could be called "scopophilia interrupta": the repeated suggestion, yet immediate denial of

[194] Cf. Mulvey, esp. section III on "Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look" in Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism.* Edited by Leo Braudy and Victoria Lowe. Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 833–844.

voyeuristic pleasure. Conceived through the seamless collaboration between Brooks' movements, her acting, and Pabst's cutting techniques, the film gradually wears down the voyeuristic gaze.

While I suggested a focus on Louise Brooks' movements to understand how voyeurism is repeatedly repelled, her movements cannot be analyzed without also considering the edits these sequences where subject to. Pabst's technique of montage and cutting earned him the reputation of a revolutionary of the movement cut. In traditional narrative cinema, the movement cut—a cut through a scene of movement already and still in progress—is generally used to make the cut itself invisible and to establish a sense of spatial and narrative coherence.[195] In Pabst's *Pandora's Box*, and the film's portrait of Lulu, however, the movement cut is overused to a degree that allows it to exert opposite effects on the viewer. In her reading of the film, Mary Ann Doane suggests that Pabst "emphasizes it so heavily and combines it with such extreme close-ups that, instead of corroborating the homogenous space created by the cuts on action, it tends to fragment that space." [196] One could certainly argue that the disorientation and fragmentation of the viewer is a general endeavor of the film, but I argue that Pabst's movement cuts do not only "create new boundaries,"[197] to dis-orient the viewer—but that they target the voyeur specifically.

The initial scene pales in comparison with the many examples of shots where Lulu's movements are cut short, and the cut helps her escape the voyeuristic (male) gaze. Because of the long series of lovers Lulu engages with throughout the film, the principle of "scopophilia

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[195] Cf. Pabst's explanation of the movement cut: "Jeder Schnitt ist aus einer Bewegung gemacht. Am Ende einer Einstellung bewegt sich jemand und am Anfang der folgenden wird die Bewegung fortgeführt. Das Auge ist so damit beschäftigt, diese Bewegungen zu verfolgen, daß es die Schnitte nicht wahrnimmt." Translation: "Each cut is made from a movement. At the end of a shot, someone moves and at the beginning of the next, the movement is continued. This way, eye is busy absorbing the movement and does not notice the cuts." – quoted in Kracauer, Siegfried. *Von Caligari Zu Hitler: Eine Psychologische Geschichte des deutschen Films*. Suhrkamp, 2014, p. 187.
[196] Doane, Mary Ann. "The Erotic Barter: *Pandora's Box (1929)*." *The Films of G.W. Pabst: an Extraterritorial Cinema*. Edited by Eric Rentschler. Rutgers University Press, 1990, pp. 62–79, p. 65.
[197] Rentschler, Eric. *The Films of G.W. Pabst: an Extraterritorial Cinema*. Rutgers University Press, 1990, p. 2.

interrupta"—her, appearing anew, but vanishing almost immediately through her own quick movement and an immediate cut—is realized as structural element of the film. The incessant cuts-through-movement and the quick rhythm deliberately insults the voyeur's gaze by cutting it short: by hindering the gaze from enjoying Lulu's beautiful image even for just a moment longer than necessary for the narrative. The fact that, as Elsaesser notes, "Lulu [...] is always in-between,"[198] thus not only describes her narrative function as the link between her various romances in the sense that she is always between lovers, but it also perfectly describes her cinematic function. Lulu is not *in* the picture (yet), but *between* them: Lulu and the cuts on her, moving, embody the cinematic surplus per se. In a sense, her essence is to be found in the film's "third," the movement emerging—through her and our bodies' engagement—between film stills.

In a few sequences in the beginning, the mise en scène is used to further contrast that Lulu is a body in flux, moving through an environment conveying stability, solidity, and is structured in clearly distinguishable social classes, none of which she truly belongs to. While Lulu is moving freely, the series of men she engages with are "the heavy black bulk of men, blocking her way."[199] In the scene immediately following the encounter with the meter man, which, unsurprisingly, ends unsatisfactorily for the latter, we learn that Lulu is in fact a trained dancer, as she meets Schigloch, her old friend and teacher, who asks her to perform some of her old choreographies. The reunion of the two takes place in the generously decorated bourgeois home of Dr. Schön.[200] The mise en scéne of Schön's home, a recurring location throughout the film, forms a stark contrast to Lulu's agility, as the furniture is bulky, big and conveys stability, wealth and a certain sense of immobility.

[198] In his aforementioned essay, Elsaesser notes that "Lulu [...] is always in-between" – cf. Elsaesser, "Lulu," p.19.
[199] Ibd., p. 18.
[200] Schigloch as well as Schön are part of the original cast written by Wedekind, which underlines the meta-cinematic function of the "meter-man" as stand-in for the moviegoer.

As though to further underline the impossibility of capturing Lulu, especially while she is dancing, oversized portraits of her in harlequinesque costumes adorn the walls of the interior and become the backdrop of her first stage.

(Lulu's first dance 1/2/3)[201]

These scenes introduce Lulu's character qualitatively. Rather than just any woman entering a hallway, Lulu herself begins to take shape—literally: as a dancer. According to Louise Brooks' own account, the interpretation of Lulu as a dancer is more the product of a serendipitous coincidence and a certain synergy between her and Pabst on set, rather than the result of diligent role study or careful planning. Talking about Lulu both, as "I" and "her", she writes:

> That I was a dancer and Pabst essentially a choreographer in his direction came as a wonderful surprise to both of us on the first day of shooting *Pandora's Box*. The expensive English translation of the script, which I had thrown unopened on the floor by my chair, had already been retrieved by an outraged assistant and banished, to Pabst's amusement. Consequently, I did not know that Lulu was a professional dancer trained in Paris [...] or that dancing was her mode of expression [...].[202]

[201] "Lulu's first dance 1/2/3." *Pandora's Box*. Screenshots by the author.
[202] Brooks, *Lulu*, p. 101.

Indeed, dancing is introduced as a "her," Lulu's, mode of expression. But there is more to it. I argue that Louise Brooks' wording and the almost careless switch from *I* ("I was a dancer") to *her* ("Lulu was a professional dancer trained in Paris") is just right, as dancing is indeed the hinge, the mode of expression, directly connecting her body with Lulu's, momentarily dissolving the boundary between actress and character. But while dancing, "as mode of expression," may, *in actu*, eliminate the distinction between Lulu and Louise, this indistinguishability—restricted to certain scenes, ephemeral and momentary as it may be—simultaneously introduces another: a distinction between "coded" (studied, directed, significant), and "uncoded" (spontaneous, improvised, not necessarily legible) movements.

While it might be true that, generally speaking, Lulu "moves without necessarily inflecting her gestures with intentionality, whereas about the men, every move, every finger and eyebrow is heavy with significance," [203] I argue that her gestures and movements are still significant, even if—or especially as—they are not controlled in the same way as those of the rest of the cast. Indeed, the omnipresence of her movements does not make them arbitrary or, on a general level, independent from processes of signification or "unreadable"—quite on the contrary. For one, her mobility is from beginning on of metaphorical significance, as the story of Lulu is, not unlike Emilia's, the story of a particular "fall." Lulu's rapid movement through social classes, her life on the run, her succession of romances, are all expressed by that general motility of her body. But more importantly, her movements assume meaning, because they do move in and out of coded signification systems. This becomes most evident when she dances.

[203] Elsaesser, "Lulu," p. 18.

To the naive viewer, her first dance rendition seems an expression of pure movement. Even if this particular dance caught on film happened to be the product of a moment of improvisation on set, it bears characteristics of certain codes, because these movements emerged from Louise Brooks' body with its particular muscle memory. As mentioned, Brooks was never trained as an actress, but she did receive an extensive dance education. Training in a local dance school at her home in Kansas from an early age, she joined Denishawn, the notorious modern dance company, based in Los Angeles, at the age of fifteen. Her transition to acting had never been quite intentional and she did not receive extra education for her work on camera. As she herself put it, she "learned to act by watching Martha Graham dance, and learned to dance by watching Charlie Chaplin act"[204]—and indeed, it is tempting to hold the history of her body, its movement through and incorporation of disciplines, accountable for her particular way of acting; as technique conceived in between genres. Yet, it is still a *technique* underlying her "impressive naturalness onscreen"[205]—and not all random, or a set of entirely uncoded movements. Wollen suggests that there is even a noteworthy affinity between Denishawn and the cinema, making it possible to read the dancing scene a little differently.

> Because of its Hollywood base, Denishawn had a particularly close relationship with the movies. [...] Dance was an important avenue into silent cinema precisely because of the importance of bodily movement and mime. At Denishawn the young Brooks was taught basic ballet, Delsartean mime and Denishawn's own brand of modern dance, whose

[204] Louise Brooks studied dance in the same company as Martha Graham and later was in a relationship with Charlie Chaplin (though they never worked on a shared film project). The quote is to be found in Somerville, Kristine. "The Thoroughly Modern World of Louise Brooks." *The Missouri Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2012, pp. 103–127, p. 104, DOI: 10.1353/mis.2012.0069.

[205] McCarthy, Margaret. "Surface Sheen And Charged Bodies. Louise Brooks As Lulu In Pandora's Box (1929)." *Weimar Cinema: an Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*, by Noah William Isenberg. Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 217–236, p. 222.

> characteristic spins and outstretched arms can be seen performed (all too briefly) by Brooks in *Pandora's Box*.[206]

Wollen's reading proves, that, at least to the expert eye, already Lulu's first, seemingly free and excessive dance sequences are indeed partly coded, as Brooks' body reveals its training, the history of its idiosyncratic movement. The fact that these codes were legible to only a few, however, and that, to the majority, Lulu's movements were perceived as confusing, disorienting—and, especially in combination with a certain cutting technique, frustrating—contributed, I argue, to the particular difficulty in gaining immediate visual pleasure from the film.

Even within the narrative of *Pandora's Box,* these movements are eventually made to stop. Indeed, the preconditions of Lulu's social advancement—culminating in and ending with her marriage to Dr. Schön—is the retreat from her profession, dancing and performing in the varieté, which requires her to give up an entire range of movements. It is not a coincidence that Lulu's first dance takes place in the home of Dr. Schön, yet in his absence, or that the first dispute with her future husband ignites over him forbidding her from starring in a trapeze act. It is also not a coincidence that the most effective weapon against Lulu, the thing eventually threatening her existence the most, turns out to be her mug shot: her very own image. This image, taken by a journalist at the court where she is accused and convicted of murder, captures her, and creates a completely immobilized version of "Lulu," that, much like the images used to advertise the film, strips the character off its personality and circulates without her body authoring the movement of circulation and distribution. By pinning Lulu down, by reducing her to a simple image and arresting her movements, Brooks is finally prepared to be consumed. The entire constellation of

[206] Wollen. "BROOKS", p. 24.

films assembled here, consisting of *Pandora's Box*, as well as the narratives following, *Diary of a Lost One*, and *Prix de Beauté*, are legible as attempts to solve a problem that Lulu's idiosyncratic, quick cut and unpredictable movements introduced to the screen.

Louise, Thymian: Correcting the Image

Almost immediately after the release of *Lulu*, Pabst and Brooks started the work on their second project, another film version of a literary piece. Louise Brooks, reluctant to go back to the United States, stayed in Berlin and the shooting process began right after the premiere of *Pandora's Box*. *Diary Of A Lost Girl*, a loose adaptation of Margarethe Böhme's 1905 bestseller of the same title,[207] still released in the very same year and bears unmissable resemblance to their first film and collaboration. Scholars and critics have pointed out the many similarities between *Pandora* and the *Diary*: on a conceptual level—both films are silent films and literary adaptations,—regarding their narratives—both films tell the story of a woman's downfall—but, particularly, regarding the two main characters—Lulu and Thymian—as played by Brooks. While the narrative similarities and the overlap between the two main figures are rather obvious, [208] there are, I argue, palpable differences, especially concerning the film's cinematography, but even more so in terms of the depiction and role of Brooks' body language and gestures.

In the *Diary*, Louise Brooks plays an apothecary's daughter, and the first few scenes present her as happy girl who is part of a well-off family. Shortly after her confirmation, however, things

[207] The title of Böhme's text is frequently translated as "*The Diary Of A Lost One,*" ridding the title of the gender connotation implied in the German original.
[208] Kracauer was one of the first to read the narratives of *Pandora's Box* and *Diary Of A Lost One* as variations of the same "theme." Cf. Kracauer. *Caligari to Hitler*, p. 179f.

change dramatically when she gets raped by her father's co-worker and assistant and becomes pregnant involuntarily. Refusing, as the conventions would have it, to marry her violator, her family forces her to give up her child and sends her to a reform school for insubordinate women. The life in the school is portrayed as torturous and at length, but eventually, Thymian manages to escape with her friend, Erika, though, having nowhere else to go, they both end up working in a brothel. After Thymian's longtime friend, Graf Osdorff, commits suicide, Osdorff's guilt-ridden uncle, trying to make up for not having been able to save his nephew, takes her in and for the first time, Thymian enjoys life freed of the constraints her family, the reform school, and the brothel. The reprieve, however, is short-lived, as, through a series of coincidences, Thymian is asked to come back to school, the second site of abuse she once fled, as Osdorff senior's wealthy friends, supporting the center in an act of misguided philanthropy, ask her to come and join the good cause. Though not exactly a happy end, the film concludes on an act of rebellion: Thymian, put on the spot and forced to decide whom to ally with, openly criticizes the school's leader duo, sides with the inmates and identifies as one of "them", as "lost one".

After adapting Wedekind's drama, which, based in dialogue, had already challenged its transformation into a silent film, the *Diary* came with its own set of difficulties. Albeit not dependent on spoken dialogue to the same degree, Böhme's text relies upon the artistic means of a first-person narrative; it was published *as* diary and frequently employs tropes to suggest writerly authenticity.[209] Evidently, this would require any filmic adaptation—as portrait of "the lost one,"

[209] Cf. the text's preface which is written from the perspective of Böhme, who introduces herself as the editor of the text and claims to have come across these diary notes and found them, unliterary as they were, still worthy for publication. "Die schlichten Aufzeichnungen erheben keinen Anspruch auf künstlerische oder literarische Wertschätzung; sie sind nichts und wollen nichts sein als ein authentischer Beitrag zu einer brennenden sozialen Frage

rather than as straight delivery of *her* text—to grapple with the question of perspective, cinematographic voice, and authenticity. Not unlike the first filmic adaptation of the novel—Richard Oswald's film from 1918[210]—Pabst's *Diary* solves the conundrum rather nonchalantly. Rather than preoccupying itself much with portrayals of acts of textual production, writing scenes or attempts to translate Böhme's first person perspective into corresponding camera moves, the film's cinematography, especially in comparison with *Pandora*'s, is strikingly conventional. Put simply: the film tells the story of a woman who happens to own a diary. The diary itself, although holding symbolic significance, is little more than a requisite, and is used, as Koll states, "more as a notepad," functioning as reminder, address book, and stationary.[211]

Even though the film quotes the written medium at times, employs flowery intertitles, and, occasionally, has the mise en scène provide information textually, the fact that its main concern is not the written medium, nor the writing woman, is made clear—perhaps most blatantly so in its announcements. A comparison between the cover of the original book by Böhme (1905) in its edition from 1907, the film poster for the first filmic adaptation (1918) and Pabst's new filmic interpretation (1929) clearly illustrates the gradual yet radical shift of focus.

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unserer Tage." Translation: "These plain notes do not aspire to artistic or literary recognition; they are nothing and do not want to be anything except an authentic contribution to an urgent social issue of our time." Cf. Böhme, Margarete. *Tagebuch Einer Verlorenen*. F. Fontane & Co, 1905, p. 3-4.

[210] Richard, Oswald, director. *Diary of a Lost Woman*. Richard-Oswald-Produktion, 1918.

[211] "Das Tagebuch selbst wird eher als Notizblock verwendet. Die Eintragungen beschränken sich sonst auf Meinerts Terminnotiz, Erikas Eintragung ihrer Adresse, Thymians Brief and Nikolas Osdorff und den Entwurf einer Zeitungsannonce." Koll, Gerald. *Pandoras Schatze: Erotikkonzeptionen in Den Stummfilmen Von G.W. Pabst*. Diskurs-Film-Verl. Schaudig Und Ledig, 1998, p. 341.

(Book cover, 1907)[212]

(Film Poster, 1918)[213]

(Film Poster, 1929)[214]

I will refrain from "reading" or "analyzing" the third poster, the announcement of Pabst's film, and I let the crude imagery speak for itself. The poster is certainly accurate in its announcement, as the picture clearly heralds that the film, despite its title, will have little to do with text or female writing, let alone the becoming of a woman author—all questions that are still part of the discussion in the original text. The perspective is not *hers*, it is *on her*, the film presents a woman's body, ready to open up, and be read.

Main character Thymian's actress Louise Brooks—who would freely coquet with the fact that she did not care to study scripts,[215] yet was in fact an avid reader and spotted clandestinely reading Schopenhauer or Proust on film sets during her breaks,[216]—again, embodies a character

[212] "Tagebuch einer Verlorenen. 1907 Edition." Taken from the Wikipedia site "Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (book)" Wikipedia, URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagebuch_einer_Verlorenen_(book).
[213] "Das [sic] Tagebuch einer Verlorenen, 1918." IMDb, URL: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0009677/.
[214] "Filmplakat: Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (1929)" Archiv für Filmposter, URL: https://www.filmposter-archiv.de/filmplakat.php?id=1698.
[215] "Mr Pabst never strained my mind with anything not too pertinent to the immediate action. The first day of shooting on *Box of Pandora* a big fat translation of the script was given me to read which, after less than ten minutes, I dropped on the floor beside my chair and happily never saw again." Brooks, Louise. "Mr. Pabst." *Image. Journal Of Photography And Motion Pictures Of The George Eastman House*, Vol. 5, No. 7, Sept. 1956, pp. 152–155, p. 155.
[216] Cf. Eisner, Lotte. "With Pabst." *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 1967.

whose individuality and persona is marked largely by her movements and gestures, though, as I argue, in a manner that differs substantially from Brooks' gestural characterization in *Pandora's Box*.

In fact, and as though in direct response to the many critical reviews *Pandora* received, the portrayal of Thymian's body reads as correction to Lulu's image, as training to acquire what Lulu had been "lacking." When Koll joins the canon of scholars working out the analogies between Brooks' interpretations of the two characters and writes how "her image is realized similarly to the image of Lulu in Pandora's Box,"[217] I cannot fully agree. Her *image*, maybe, her body and her movements, however, certainly not. Rather, I argue that the *Diary* unfolds as a visual study on bodily disciplining, played out on the character's, Thymian's, body, yet extending to the actress, Louise Brooks, and her body, respectively.

As laid out in the synopsis, the storyline has the protagonist go through an entire series of social institutions (family, school, brothel), yet the main focus is clearly on one place. Thymian, after being raped and becoming involuntarily pregnant at the age of fourteen, is separated from her newborn child as well as her family and sent to a reformatory school for insubordinate girls. Narratively, the reform school is the direct response to Thymian's body's alleged misbehavior. Her rape is interpreted as "seduction," on both, an intradiegetic level—by her family, who is outraged over the fact that she refuses to marry her abuser,— as well as on an extradiegetic level—as some contemporary film scholars' critical reviews make plain.[218] Similarly to *Emilia*, the crime is attributed to the body itself, which, within the frame of the moral logics at work, justifies and

[217] Cf. Kappelhoff, Hermann. *Der Möblierte Mensch: G.W. Pabst Und Die Utopie Der Sachlichkeit*. Vorwerk 8, 1994, p. 150.
[218] Cf. Kracauer, who, in his discussion of the film, writes that Thymian got "[s]educed by her father's assistant," paving the way for a history of misinterpretation of one of the film's most crucial scenes. Kracauer. *Caligari to Hitler*, p. 179.

commands the physical nature of *its* punishment: it is Thymian's body which is ordered to suffer the appropriate penalty for the specific crimes it committed.

The central institution of this bodily punishment is the reform school which, consequently, is one of the film's most important settings. In his study, Kappelhoff shows how the film portrays the school as systematic exorcism in which the body, possessed by adverse desire, is systematically ridded of its impurity.[219] The school is where the larger part of the narrative is set, where Thymian meets Erika, her only confidante,[220] and where, after her excursus to the brothel, she finds herself returning to in the final scene, as the film ends on an ambiguous moment of resistance. But aside its function for the plot, the school is central because it lays bare the narrative principle of the film itself, as story of bodily disciplining reaches more bodies than just those of the fictional characters it portrays.

The school is run by two authority figures: the headmistress, a stern woman with an oversized cross dangling from her neck, and the institute's patriarch, a massive man usually portrayed as looming over his all-female fosterlings. Both figures' sadistic nature is highlighted in every scene and they are both portrayed as taking pleasure, even sexually, in physically and mentally disciplining and abusing their inmates. The scenes alternate between the common room where meals are taken and regular prayers are held, and the sleeping area, a large room filled with bunk beds.

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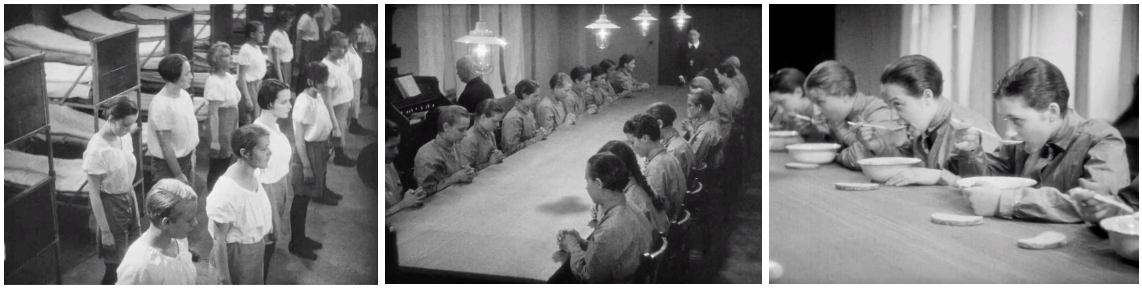
[219] „In der Sequenz im Erziehungsheim rückt die Besetzung des Körpers durch ein ihm feindliches Begehren, der untergründig sexuelle Charakter der sozialen Machtverhältnisse und bürgerlichen Moralansprüche, in den Mittelpunkt der Inszenierung." Kappelhoff. *Der Möblierte Mensch*, p. 153.

[220] In Böhme's original, "Erika," another name with floral etymology, is the name of Thymian's illegitimate child. In both versions the child dies, yet in the film the baby is left nameless and "Erika" is used for another character, Thymian's closest friend and female ally, who the film adds to the plot.



(Ensemble Scenes 1/2/3)[221]

The group of roughly twenty girls living at the reformatory are usually presented in wide angle and long shots, which emphasizes the collective nature of their every action and makes them legible as homogenous ensemble engaging in choreographic formations. Each and every activity is performed in perfect simultaneity: praying, eating, and the gymnastic training before bedtime, are all part of the structured and strictly choreographed life at the school. The mise en scène enhances the impression of utmost orderliness and sets the scene for the clear-cut gestural routines. Just like the inmates' uniforms, the interior of all the rooms is austere and functional: geometric forms depicted in wide-angle shots enhance the sense of de-individualization and convey an atmosphere of constant pressure to conform, not to stick out, not to disturb the picture. Especially the common bedroom is reminiscent of a military institution, and the gestural behavior commanded from the inmates further evoke such associations.

This school is where Thymian's body—who was, just a few months before, Lulu's body—is finally disciplined to control its movements. It is made to conform to the choreography of the ensemble, conducted by a sadistic duo and aestheticized by the cinematography which takes on the perspective of the observers. The fact that the patriarch and the headmistress are in perfect control

[221] "Ensemble scenes 1/2/3." *Diary of a Lost Girl*. Screenshots by the author.

and in charge of conducting the rhythm, is visualized using musical requisites which holds—especially considering that this is a 1929 film *choosing* to be silent—particular metaphorical relevance. The cinematography adds to the sense of brutality emanating from these musical instruments. During prayers and whenever the dining room or workplace are entered or left, the headmaster assures the simultaneity of everyone's movements with the help of a piano he is depicted playing in exaggeratedly strict staccato movements. The headmistress uses an oversized gong and a sharp drumstick to coordinate everybody's movements—even in the sleeping area, where one of the most curious scenes of bodily disciplining is played out. Referring to this very scene of evening gymnastics, Heide Schlüpmann writes:

> In the reform school, sadism is more than just a controlling gaze. Here it is acted out. Its representation, therefore, is not accomplished by camera pans, but above all through rapid cuts, whose incisive sharpness accords to the strokes of the gong in the evening gymnastics scene.[222]

The gymnastics scene contains, in a nutshell, the message of the film: simultaneity is good, the collective ornament of bodies is beautiful, discipline is sexy. Though narratively embedded, the scene sticks out, as the cinematography and the cutting technique, differ from the rest of the film. Especially the cutting's curious alliance with the performed movements (which Thymian's body reiterates and gesturally quotes in later parts of the film)[223] make it relevant.

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[222] Schlüpmann, Heide. "The Brothel as an Arcadian Space? *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929)." *The Films Of G.W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema*. Edited by Eric Rentschler, Rutgers University Press, 1990, pp. 80–90, p. 81.

[223] "In der Gymnastikszene erfolgt exakt die Umkehrung der Leibesübungen aus dem Heim. Thymians erste Übung ist jene Rumpfbeuge, die aus dem Heim bekannt ist. Die Überzeichnung des Schaurigen wird zur grotesken Kabarettnummer verkehrt: diesmal decodiert der ‚Schüler' als erotisch, was die ‚Lehrerin' nicht erotisch verstanden wissen will." Koll. *Pandoras Schaïze*, p. 364.

(Gymnastics scene 1/2/3)[224]

The scene is the sleeping area. The headmistress enters and brings with her the musical equipment. All the girls are ordered to take off the overdresses of their uniforms and line up in front of their beds. What happens next is not entirely easy to put into words. This is how Siegfried Kracauer describes the scene:

> While upon her order the scantily clad girls perform exercises, this terrible female marks the tempo and simultaneously swings her head, until her whole body is involved in an oscillating movement that grows ever faster and then suddenly comes to a stop.[225]

We may remember George Gilles Tourette's difficulties in describing deviant gestural behavior—and indeed, words seem to fail to fully translate the spectacle into language. On a technical level, the scene exhausts the movement cut, Pabst's signature technique, and presents an increasingly rapid succession of shot and counter shot between the headmistress, who the camera gradually zooms in on, and the ensemble, who are exercising the movement sequences in simultaneity. Rather than protecting either of the women from the voyeuristic gaze, in this case, the movement

[224] "Gymnastics scene 1/2/3." *Diary of a Lost Girl*. Screenshots by the author.
[225] Kracauer, *Caligari to Hitler*, p. 180.

cut becomes complicit in the production of voyeuristic pleasure, as it, too, begins to adhere to the headmistress' rhythmic command. As she, the headmistress, is the one visibly deriving immediate pleasure from the sight of the girls, and the scene culminates in a fading close up on her face—bearing an expression suggesting orgiastic, insane pleasure,—the function of the sight of female gymnastic movement is made abundantly clear. Thymian's body, who was sent to the school, accused of having aroused sexual pleasure in her first perpetrator, at the school, is made to arouse sexual pleasure yet again—this time as punishment and in conformity and as part of a larger, all-female ensemble.

We may remember that, in response to *Pandora*, one of the critics, frustrated with Lulu's lack of lascivious demeanor and easily consumable sexual appeal, managed to find one positive aspect about Brooks' movement: "[e]inmal turnt sie ein bißchen," he wrote, "und da ist sie am reizvollsten."[226] Though written about *Pandora*, and probably in reference to Lulu's very short scene at a trapeze, it is the *Diary* which excessively uses the depiction of physical exercise as source for visual pleasure. With that, and apart from the direct references to the introduction of sound film and its command for simultaneity, the film also quotes another topical debate of the time, for 1928 marked the very first year women were allowed to compete in the Olympics. Female gymnastics, a discipline with its roots in Germany's—formerly all-male—Turnkultur,[227] found global acknowledgement.

[226] Pol, "Die Büchse der Pandora." Translation: "One time, she is doing some gymnastics, and that's when she is most attractive."

[227] For a brief but thorough historization of German gymnastics culture and its specific ties cf. the passage on "The historical model of Turnen" in Kant, Marion. "German Gymnastics, Modern German Dance, and Nazi Aesthetics." *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 2016, pp. 4–25., DOI: 10.1017/s0149767716000164.

The fact that just at the time of the first professional women gymnasts, the film focuses on the "sexy" elements of sports and discovers it as source for visual pleasure is certainly not coincidental. By exposing Brooks' scantily clad body, performing movements and arousing visual pleasure doing so, the evening gymnastic scenes seems to solve two of Lulu's problems at once. Firstly, her sex appeal is finally presented in a legible and consumable manner. Through Thymian, Brooks' deviant gestural behavior is made to conform with that of the rest of the ensemble, so that her body can be appreciated without requiring the voyeur to grapple with any of its disturbing idiosyncratic gestures. Secondly, Thymian is presented while engaging in "Turnübungen," a sport discipline the US at that time was in the process of importing from Germany.[228] Brooks, who, as Lulu, had been neither sexy nor German enough to please the critical review, and, on top of that, had moved and gestured so differently from everyone else, is finally made to conform.

What these scenes of Thymian at the reform school thus simultaneously create and criticize is the visual pleasure deriving from watching a (female) body's systematic disciplining—from a safe distance, certainly—and its gradual taking-shape in conformity. While, on the surface, the story line suggests a moral causality between sexual pleasure and bodily punishment (sexual pleasure is immoral, so has to be punished), the reform school portrays the very perversion of the morals it propagates. The particular form of Thymian's (and everyone else's) bodily punishment at the school—the strict coordination of their every move, and everyone's absolute subordination to the movement of the ensemble—ends up creating pleasure, sexual pleasure even, to those watching: the headmistress and the patriarch, but also, by extension, the cinema audience. Had Lulu been enabled to escape the voyeuristic gaze—much to the disappointment of an entire number of critics

[228] Pfister, Gertrud. *Gymnastics, a Transatlantic Movement: from Europe to America*. Routledge, 2015.

and moviegoers—and to resist it and escape it, at least for a while, her reincarnation, Thymian, is less successful. She is the gymnast, training hard to rid Louise's body from Lulu, the insubordinate dancer, and paving the way for it to embody Lucienne—the perfect model.

Louise, Lucienne: L'Image Parfaite

Although, again, just very little time passed between the premiere of the *Diary* and the work on the third film, *Prix de Beauté,* translated to English as "*Beauty Prize,*" or, more frequently, as "*Miss Europe,*"[229] the film differs from *Diary of a Lost Girl* and *Pandora's Box* in a lot of respects. Firstly, *Prix* is a French production, directed by Augusto Genina, an Italian director, and Pabst, much more involved in the two aforementioned projects, only produced and co-wrote the screenplay for the film. Secondly, the film employs post-production synchronized sound and marked Louise Brook's first appearance in a sound film. The film was originally shot in French which explains why Brooks' voice was not part of the original recording; yet, even for the English version, her character's voice got dubbed by another actress. Despite the film's obvious differences to the other two, the screenplay contains a number of references to Pabst's earlier collaborations with Brooks, again, especially regarding the conceptualization of the main character herself. Once more, Brooks is presented with the same hairdo and styling known from her other films—not to mention that her character's name, as written by Pabst, happens to be "Lucienne," or, short "Lulu".

[229] The loose and sort of incorrect translation is, as Lawrence Rainey writes, a nod to the American beauty contest which had been named "Miss America" in 1922. Cf. Rainey, Lawrence. "Gender, Spectacle, and Machinery: Prix De Beauté (1930)." *The Space Between*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2010, pp. 125–139, p. 126.

The plot is straight-forward and rather simple. Lucienne, a young woman who works as a typist in a Parisian newspaper agency, accidentally comes across an announcement for a beauty pageant in search for Paris' most beautiful woman. On a whim, she mails in a couple of photographs of herself, and, before she can revoke her submission, gets chosen as finalist. She wins the contest and has to go to Spain within the hour to compete on an international level for the title of "Miss Europe". Without being able to notify Andre, her obsessively jealous partner, Lucienne sets off to Spain and wins the international competition as well. Andre, furious about her departure but even more so about his girlfriend's sudden public fame, follows her to Spain and, in a dramatic confrontation, presents her with an ultimatum: either she gives up her glamourous life and comes back to Paris with him, or they are through. Though she chooses him and returns to Paris with him, their quiet private life leaves her miserable and unsatisfied, and she misses her life as a starlet. When an offer from *Sound Film International* reaches her by mail, she cannot resist, and accepts, leaving Andre with nothing but a written note. Lucienne gets to produce a short film, at the premiere of which jealous and heart-broken Andre shows up unexpectedly and kills her as she sits in the audience. She dies, as she watches herself on screen.

The rather obvious parallels explicitly citing earlier collaborations between Brooks and Pabst, put the film, even though it is a multi-national hybrid and got handed over from a French to an Italian director, also on the radar of Weimar cinema experts and Pabst scholars. Gerald Koll, for instance, describes the film as "reflex" and direct response to the two projects Pabst and Brooks had completed shortly before, and he claims that *Prix* presented a platform for Louise Brooks to play

"her character" once more.[230] Coincidentally, Koll supports his argument—that Brooks, essentially, embodies variations of the very same woman in all of her films—with reference to certain recurring gestural motifs in their role as mediations "[ü]ber die Trennlinie [der] Filme hinweg," [231] as bridges between and across films.

While I do agree that gestural quotation plays a role within the filmic constellation of all three films, the examples Koll cites show that this only goes for cinematically already established, and coded gestures, such as the close up on a dropping hand, to signify surrender. These are gestures that are not only easily legible, but also impersonal to a degree that any constellation of body and apparatus could produce (or quote) them. In fact, it is much more interesting to look at the gestures and bodily movements aside this coded repertoire, for focalizing on those, reveals how Brooks' *own* gestural behavior, the idiosyncratic part of her body's movement—as we have seen, at times illegible, inaccessible, deviant, and not always sexy—become subject to gradual extinction.

Prix de Beauté presents a preliminary completion of this process of separating her bodies' physiognomic from its gestural being. If the question is how "Brooks' face became a kind of logo"[232] and when her gradual transformation to a "pure image," [233] was completed, *Prix de Beauté*, is the source to look—for the film marks the finalization of the process of Brooks' body's disciplining, and her graduation as icon.

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[230] „In ihrem dritten europäischen (und letzten ‚großen') Film erscheint die Brooks-Figur gleichsam als Reflex ihrer beiden deutschen Rollen." Koll. *Pandoras Schätze*, p. 388.
[231] "Über die Trennlinie beider Filme hinweg verlaufen Motivlinien, etwa die so auffällig herabsinkende Hand als Zeichen der willfährigen Beute, jener Geste, in der sich Lulu und Thymian begegnen – jene nach dem großen Tod, diese vor dem kleinen." Koll, Gerald. "Das Medium des Pathologen. Präsentationen von Erotik, Männlichkeits- und Weiblichkeitskonstruktionen in DIE BÜCHSE DER PANDORA und TAGEBUCH EINER VERLORENEN." *Louise Brooks: Rebellin, Ikone, Legende*, by Krenn Günter and Karin Moser, Filmarchiv Austria, 2006, pp. 105–127, p. 107.
[232] Wollen. "BROOKS," p. 24.
[233] Cf. Koll. *Pandoras Schätze*, p. 304.

We may still recall the first scene of *Pandora's Box* and Brooks' initial appearance as Lulu: her sudden and ephemeral presence, her visual control of the setting, the cutting's alliance with her quick and untamed movements—and the deep trouble this had posed to critics across the board. What *Pandora* had still offered—resistance to the voyeur's gaze, and a certain cinematographic respect for the female body—is clearly gone in the film at hand. Instead, *Prix de Beauté* follows what Kappelhof identifies as cinematic trend during the late twenties. Rather than presenting women characters with the pathos of theatricality as earlier tradition tended to do, the new focus is the fetishized female body itself. Employing a common visual trope, the female body becomes subject to gradual "Enthüllung"[234]—the body's divestment and exposure are new preconditions for its appearance. In 1930, Lucienne, the "new Lulu", enters the film like this:

(Lucienne's entrance 1/2/3)[235]

Beautiful female legs, lasciviously stripping off high heel shoes from the side of an open car parked at a beach. A random passerby on the beach catches sight of the legs, and approaches the car

[234] "[...] [D]as melodramatische Bild der Frau, dem die theatrale Überhöhung der Heroine noch die Folie abgab, wird ersetzt durch das fetischierte Bild des weiblichen Körpers. Das Spiel mit der Enthüllung des Körpers rückt in das Zentrum kinematographischer Darstellung. die Filme zeigen oder sie inszenieren das Kalkül des Voyeurs." Kappelhoff, *Der Möblierte Mensch*. Vorwerk 8, 1994, p. 125.
[235] "Lucienne's entrance 1/2/3." *Prix de Beauté*. Screenshots by the author.

window, excited by the enticing image and eager to see more. He sneaks a peek through the window of the car where, inside, the woman's silhouette becomes visible, carelessly undressing her body to get ready for the beach. The man is thrilled, presses his face against the window, smiles and waves as he tries to get the woman's attention. She turns around, visibly surprised over the fact that she is being watched, giggles shyly and throws her clothes against the window, in the half-hearted attempt to fend off the voyeur. The visual axes run through the car window, which is signified, curiously, through a slightly oval bull's eye, concentrating the focus towards the inner center of the frame and further enhancing the hierarchy between shot and counter shot, as his frame is a little higher than hers, making it clear that he did not only spot her first, but also looks down on her.

In line with Marlene Dietrich's famous dictum about her filming experience—that, no matter, really, what the film was about or who was filming, she was ordered to show and lift her legs ("wurde mir befohlen ein Bein zu heben")[236]—the unconcealed fetishization and gradual fragmentation of the female body informs the cinematography of *Prix*' most relevant scenes. With Lucienne's introduction as a set of beautiful legs, a systematic fragmentation of the female body commences, which is developed further throughout the film and culminates in its total disassembly at the international modeling competition, where a montage of close ups on legs, butts and, at one time, Lucienne's full, but decapitated body narratively prefigure her victory of the title.

[236] "Wann immer man mich filmte, wurde mir befohlen ein Bein hochzuheben, links oder rechts, das war egal." Dietrich, Marlene. *Nehmt Nur Mein Leben … Reflexionen*. Henschel, 1984, p. 72.

(Modelling contest 1/2/3)[237]

The precondition for Lucienne becoming "Miss Europe" is Brooks, entirely becoming Lucienne, and, by that, objectified. To enhance the objectification of the female body, intertitles (not quite necessary in sound film, but still frequently used as artistic device), present Lucienne's/Brooks' body in its entire physical dimensions and measurements, while the cinematography ensures to cutting up her movements for close-ups and easy consumption.

A direct comparison with the cutting techniques in *Pandora*, which obviously were also used to cut through bodies, reveals the profound difference in purpose. The only close up on the original Lulu's legs happens during a sequence where the character actually *makes a scene* herself— as, in the backstage area of the varieté theatre, she throws a tantrum over a disagreement with her future husband. Furious over Schön's requests regarding one of her upcoming acts, she hides her face under covers, and wildly kicks her feet in a decidedly un-lascivious manner, exasperating him, Schön (and the voyeur), even more, as any attempt of a fetishizing reading is undermined. The opposite happens here. Not only is Lucienne introduced and treated as sexual object by camera and co-players alike, the first scene already also establishes the figure of the voyeur as the funny and playful, likeable and relatable, completely harmless everyman. Had Lulu-on-film still posed a

[237] "Modelling contest 1/2/3." *Prix de Beauté*. Screenshots by the author.

counter-image to the fetishized woman[238] and, repeatedly, an offense to the voyeur's eye, Lucienne is portrayed as helpless victim to the aesthetic pleasure she cannot help but arouse.

The film's many problematic aesthetic choices, its blatant sexism, as well as its rather conventional story line and cinematography may all have contributed to its position at the sideline of critical film scholarship. And although *Prix* shared with *Pandora* an initially unsuccessful release in almost all of the countries the film premiered at the time,[239] the reason for its lack of success was certainly not because it would offend the voyeuristic gaze, or because it was too subtle in its portrayal and exploitation of Brooks' sex appeal. But there are nonetheless interesting aspects to uncover, especially with regards to *Prix* employment of sound. Sound was added only post-production, and, as Rainey writes, was perceived as a rather "uneasy combination,"[240] but it takes on a particular function, especially with regard to Brooks' acting body. Eventually, the fetishization of Lucienne's body transgresses the purely visual realm—as the very last scene, a soundful collage of a scenic mise en abyme exemplifies.

After having left the modeling business behind to appease her jealous boyfriend, Lucienne agrees to settle into a quiet and private bourgeoise existence with her new husband. Even though their quiet life soon makes her fundamentally unhappy, she resists all temptation to return to the life as public figure she misses so dearly. She cannot, however, refuse when she receives a particular offer which happens to come from "*Sound Film International.*" Curiously, for the larger part of the film and the entire narrative run up to Lucienne's modeling success, the fact that she has an

[238] ‚Lulu' ist das Gegenstück zum fetischierten Bild der Frau." Kappelhoff, *Der Möblierte Mensch*, p. 159.
[239] It was mostly shown in European countries and only released in the US in 1958 – cf. Rainey, "Gender, Spectacle, and Machinery", p. 126.
[240] Ibd., p. 126.

exceptional singing voice does not come up. Yet, after coming to fame by value of her face, and winning the title by value of her other body parts, "*Sound Film International*" discovers her for the movies and adds a final fragment, her voice, to complete and perfect her transformation into a real star.

The premiere of the produced movie—a short film starring her, Lucienne, posing almost entirely still in front of a piano and singing a French chanson—concludes *Prix de Beauté*. It is the last scene before Lucienne's jealous ex-partner enters the movie cinema and shoots her, leaving her to die while her film-self lives on:

(Premiere 1/2/3)[241]

With this sound-accompanied mise en abyme the film ends by marrying visual and auditory pleasure, while simultaneously warning from the implications of the "overdose" it can cause. Morally, and on an intradiegetic level, the film and the last scene in particular warn (women) not to become narcissistic and not to strive for fame too much and advises (men) to control obsessively jealous behavior. Both, narcissism and jealousy are thus marked as the "price of beauty" announced in the title, and, by implication, the emotional cost of indulging in cinematic pleasures.

[241] "Premiere 1/2/3." *Prix de Beauté*, Screenshots by the author.

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Apart from its moralistic conclusion, the final scene and its mise en abyme, accentuates the difference between acting in silent and acting in sound film and Brooks' very own position within that historic transition. Evidently, gestures, together with all other aspects of the acting body, such as physiognomy and mimic expression,[242] hold more central relevance in a medium that learned to prioritize image over language. Especially by the end of the 1920s, when sound film had already gained popularity in the US, yet Brooks came to Europe, to work with film makers initially reluctant to switch to sound, Brooks' acting had introduced a specificity that distinguished her from other bodies on German cinema screens. Other than many of her famous German colleagues, Brooks did not come from theatre,[243] but from dance—and introduced an acting technique that was, as Jacobsen notes, not rooted in expressive mimics, but deferred processes of signification to her entire body:

> Die Stummheit des Films jener Jahre verlangt, die Sprache mit dem Ausdruck des Gesichts wesentlich zu ersetzen. Bis hin zur Maske. Bis hin zum Schrei. [...] Nicht jedoch Louise Brooks, deren ebenes Gesicht dem extremen Mienenspiel entsagt, deren Ausdruck in einer wahrhaft empfundenen Ganzheit liegt. Darin genau liegt ihre Kunst. Die Sprache zu

[242] Kessler defines physiognomy, mimics and gesture as distinctive, but is in full awareness that the difference is not always immediately apparent: "Die Gestik ist die dritte wesentliche Komponente der körperlichen Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten. Von Physiognomie und Mimik unterscheidet sie sich grundlegend, auch wenn dieser Unterschied nicht immer auf den ersten Blick sichtbar ist." Kessler, Frank. "Lesbare Körper." *Stummes Spiel, Sprechende Gesten*, Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1998, pp. 15–28, p. 19.

[243] According to Antonin Artaud to make a "very good film," it is necessary that actors have trained in theatre, which marks the particular strength of German films as, in comparison with other filmic traditions "[...] the German film actors come from the theatre and bring all their dramatic talent to the cinema." – Cf. Artaud, Philippon, Henri. "Antonin Artaud Tells Us About German Cinema." *Collected Works Antonin Artaud*. By Antonin Artaud and translated by Alastair Hamilton. Calder and Boyars, 1972, pp. 88–89.

> verlagern auf den ganzen Körper, ihn zu verstehen und zu interpretieren als Teil der Physiognomie, vielfältiger, ungestalter, geheimnisvoller, mitteilsamer.[244]

Certainly, Jacobsen's conflation of all silent film acting as entirely mimics-based and expressionist does not quite acknowledge the vast variety within silent film acting styles at the time. Scholars focusing entirely on silent film acting, such as Frank Kessler, never fail to insist on the vast variety within the medium and insist that "historic developments, genre, aesthetic norms as well as the respective functional context," [245] all need to be taken into account when reading bodies and their language in a particular silent film. But while, towards the end of the Weimar period and during the last few years of silent film, acting in silent films had already had a good decade to unfold specific styles and the skillful compensation for the lack of synchronized sound in performance accounts for a vast variety of silent acting styles, Jacobsen's observation regarding Louise Brooks holds true. As the analyses of the three films and a consideration of their critical reception have shown, that this is indeed how Brooks was read: as someone whose face lacked expression, and whose body language demanded a certain kind of reading not everyone appreciated.

What the analyses also show, however, is how Brooks' body's specificity and her particular acting style was made to disappear. The depiction of Brooks' body throughout the three films reads as visual story of its disciplining, as both, its physiognomic as well as its gestural significance is, step

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[244] Jacobsen, Wolfgang. "Broken Mirror. Brooks and Pabst - Vice Versa." *Louise Brooks: Rebellin, Ikone, Legende*. Edited by Günter Krenn and Karin Moser. Filmarchiv Austria, 2006, pp. 78–103, p. 95.

[245] "In dem Maße, in dem man versucht, der Komplexität und Vielfalt des frühen Kinos gerecht zu werden, zeigt sich, daß auch die Arbeit der Schauspieler in dieser Zeit nach sehr unterschiedlichen Bezugssystemen ausgerichtet ist, bei denen neben den historischen Veränderungen auch Aspekte wie Genre, ästhetische Normen sowie der jeweilige funktionale Zusammenhang eine entscheidende Rolle spielen." Translation: "As you try to grapple with the complexity and variety of early cinema, you realize that the work of the actor, too, is oriented towards paradigms and in addition to the historical contexts aspects such as genre, aesthetic norms as well as the respective functional relations play an important role." Cf. Kessler. "Lesbare Körper", p. 21.

by step, ridded of any individuality in style and made to conform. This process of gradual standardization goes in line with developments within the industry, and was, as many scholars argue, demanded by the medium itself, and directly linked to the introduction of sound. In his comprehensive study Antony Paraskeva shows how film's audio synchronization, its commercialization and its standardization go hand in hand and how this directly affected the acting body:

> The studios and cartels developed a house-style of naturalism, which synchronised speech and gesture and effectively denied, through sheer economic dominance, the possibility of alternative acting styles and film technique. The rich and varied innovations of the late silent era were suddenly halted by a standardised consensus imposed on the industry to ensure maximum profit.[246]

Louise, the dancer, Louise, the gymnast, Louise the model. *Prix de Beauté* marked Louise Brooks' goodbye from the European screens, and, soon thereafter, from cinema screens in general. The mise en abyme during the very last scene softly echoes her very first scene as "Lulu" where, dancing in front of a large portrait of her, another mise en abyme introduced her as pure movement. Her presence could not be more different. Mouthing someone else's song, hand on her hip, barely moving a finger, she has become, finally, the perfect picture.

[246] Paraskeva, *The Speech-Gesture Complex*, p. 134.

Chapter III: Performing Gestures

> Man spricht heute immer häufiger im Namen des Volkes. [...] Regimes, Parteien, Presse, Literaturen, Ästhetiken, wer oder was gibt sich nicht als volkstümlich aus?[247]
>
> (Roland Barthes, "Leitartikel")

> [...] ich horche auf das Mitreißende der Botschaft, nicht auf die Botschaft selbst [...][248]
>
> (Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*)

In the summer of 2000, German performance artist Christoph Schlingensief came to Austria to contribute to the "Wiener Festwochen," an annual, rather prestigious, publicly financed art festival in Vienna. *Please Love Austria*, the piece Schlingensief developed for the festival in collaboration with a range of other artists, turned out to be spectacularly successful. To this day, it is one of the most controversial pieces in the history of post-dramatic performance. The concept was simple yet effective: loosely imitating the format of the reality TV show Big Brother, Schlingensief set up a container in Vienna's city center, which, during seven days, was populated with a group of "real" foreign bodies: twelve people from abroad, who were seeking asylum in Austria.[249] The events in the container were broadcasted live, while, via a supplementary platform on the internet, the Austrian audience and public were invited to vote their least favorite participant out of the show—and the country.

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[247] Roland Barthes. "Leitartikel." *Schriften zum Theater.* Aus dem Französischen von Dieter Hornig. Alexander Verlag, 2001, pp. 60–64, p. 60.
[248] Roland Barthes. *Sade, Fourier, Loyola.* Übersetzt von Maren Sell und Jürgen Hoch. Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 15.
[249] For information on the twelve participants as well as other background information, I refer to the excellent collection of material by Lilienthal and Philipp, which is, arguably, not only documentation but substantial part of the performance. Matthias Lilienthal and Claus Philipp. *Schlingensiefs Ausländer raus. Bitte liebt Österreich. Dokumentation.* Suhrkamp, 2000.

The piece worked as a direct commentary on the xenophobic political program of the recently elected Austrian government, targeting mainly the *Austrian Freedom Party* ("FPÖ"), a far-right nationalist party, and one of the central political players after the elections in the year before. A huge sign that read "Ausländer Raus!" ("Foreigners Out!"), erected highly visible on the top of the container, served as the performance's center and linguistic leitmotif. Throughout the week of its duration, Schlingensief, the central spokesperson on site, delivered hate speeches inspired by the Freedom Party's rhetoric repertoire, and the party's xenophobic slogans—"Foreigners Out!" being just one of many provocative mottoes they had coined—were printed on large posters and hung around the performance site. At the same time, the spectacle in and around the container and the mock deportations "acted out"[250] the implications of the words. The performance was an intervention that straightforwardly sought to expose *Excitable Speech*[251] at work and to investigate "[...] what follows if [...] to speak is to act."[252] Though conceived as a live performance, it is well documented across the medial forms and formats it spanned, including but not limited to newspaper articles, magazines, books, film footage, and a documentary feature by Paul Poet.[253] *Please Love Austria* initiated an unprecedented scandal and was commented on and (mis)interpreted by just about all sides of the political spectrum.

With this "total mobilisation of the Austrian public sphere"[254] in the summer of 2000 and the international attention *Please Love Austria* stirred, the performance also formed a pivotal

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[250] Cf. Schlingensief's remarks on the performance's conceptual framework: "Das war die Grundidee: Wir nehmen Haider-Sätze und spielen sie durch." Christoph Schlingensief. *Ich weiß ich war's.* Edited by Aino Laberenz. Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2012, p. 88.
[251] Judith Butler. *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative.* New York & London: Routledge, 1997.
[252] Ibd., quoted from Jonathan Culler's description of Butler's endeavor, printed on the backside cover.
[253] Paul Poet, director. *Foreigners Out! Schlingensief's Container.* Austria: monitorpop entertainment, 2001.
[254] Thomas Mießgang, quoted in Tara Forrest. *Realism as Protest. Kluge, Schlingensief, Haneke.* Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015, p. 73.

moment in the artistic development of Christoph Schlingensief, and, as I will argue, introduced a phase of the artist's intensified examination of various bodily realities, *before*—triggered by his illness—he began investigating his own body for artistic purposes. In my chapter, I am studying how the depiction and employment of foreign bodies, notably Schlingensief's very own, contributed to the signification process of the performance. I will argue that *Please Love Austria*'s tremendous impact depended on several irreproducible, gestural, and bodily co-incidences. Contrary to the claim that "We need *Please Love Austria* in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles,"[255] as theatre-maker Peter Sellers said, I will argue against the performance's eligibility as a model or example. Focusing on the curious coincidences and particularities of the piece, particularly the lingual gestures the various bodies on-site employed, I will investigate the performance's exploitation of the intrinsic connection between body and speech that forms the basis for a body to be perceived as "foreign."

[255] Peter Sellars during his visit of the performance, documented in Poet, *Foreigners Out!*

The Body in Action, The Body in Performance

When writing about the gesture in performance, Schlingensief's is perhaps an unlikely body to focus on. To the genre of post-dramatic performance art—with its emphasis "with/on/to the body"[256] and its many intersections with art forms such as acting and dance—, the gesticulating body has always been of particular and immediate relevance. Schlingensief, for the larger part of his artistic biography, was hardly known for putting his body on display, in danger, or, generally, visibly at the center of his work, unlike other performance artists of his generation, such as VALIE EXPORT, Hermann Nitsch, or Marina Abramović, who notoriously used their bodies as primary points of reference. Consequently, *Please Love Austria*, even though well-represented in scholarly literature, has not been investigated in that particular regard. Officially, Schlingensief's artistic exploration of his own body only began later, at the end of his life, when his terminal illness "required"[257] him to do so. Yet, the integration of Schlingensief into the discourse of performative body activism sheds new light on his work, as Schlingensief, even before the diagnosis, employed his body in the sense of a subtle bodily reality or realness. The adaptation of the reality TV format for the live spectacle allowed him to source bodies, including his own, in a way that used them, essentially, as human resource, as body material. In this regard, *Please Love Austria* simultaneously belongs to and transgresses the genre of body activism in the narrower sense.

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[256] Hans-Thies Lehmann. *Postdramatic Theatre.* Translated by Karen Jürs-Munby. Routledge, 2006, p. 163.

[257] In his "cancer diary," Schlingensief describes treating his illness as source for artistic output as an act of regaining a minimum of autonomy, and advises others to do the same: "Wenn Sie also erkranken und bemerken, dass Sie als Mensch kaum noch vorkommen und das Gefühl nicht loswerden, nur noch fremdbestimmt zu sein, dann beschweren Sie sich." Christoph Schlingensief. *So schön wie hier kanns im Himmel gar nicht sein. Tagebuch einer Krebserkrankung.* Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2009, p. 6.

Schlingensief's appearances in his work are well documented.[258] While he started his artistic career behind the camera and, even as a teenager, identified as "ongoing director,"[259] he has always contributed to many more aspects of cultural production, including performing and performing for the camera. As many have noted, this complicates the question of his position within the artwork as well as his œuvre's classification.[260] Even his first films, for instance *Das Totenhaus der Lady Florence*,[261] the filmic adaptation of a detective novel he shot at the tender age of fourteen, Schlingensief recurs in small, and often merely casual cameo appearances: the camera approaching him only from a distance, as he, hardly recognizable, makes a call from a telephone booth.[262] Within these early, ambitious filmic experiments, Schlingensief and his team still tried to adhere to the rules of classical storytelling by developing characters and aiming for narrative coherence. Schlingensief's own acting, however, be it by choice or by lack of skill, already seems to betray these efforts. Rather than "acting" a particular role, it looks more like young Schlingensief just happened to be there, caught on camera haphazardly, *some* body assuming a completely non-essential and digressive function.

Certainly, reading the fourteen-year-old Schlingensief as a "non-acting" or even "post-dramatic" performer in his own films would be a stretch. Yet, the artist's eventual expansion of the cinematic format and his journey through a variety of media presents itself as gradual gravitation

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[258] Cf. Schlingensief scholar Sarah Ralfs' comment "Von Anbeginn seines künstlerischen Schaffens ist Schlingensief in seinen Arbeiten selbst aufgetreten." Sarah Ralfs. *Theatralität der Existenz: Ethik und Ästhetik bei Christoph Schlingensief*. Transcript, 2019, p. 12.
[259] Cf. Christoph Schlingensief. "Was erwarte ich von meinem zukünftigen Beruf? (Regisseur)" *Ich weiß, ich war's,* pp. 175ff.
[260] Posthumously, scholars have agreed on the term "Gesamtkünstler" to refer to the artist and the vast variety of artistic disciplines he dabbled with. Cf. Pia Janke and Theresa Kovacs. *Der Gesamtkünstler Christoph Schlingensief*. Praesens, 2011.
[261] Christoph Schlingensief, director. *Das Totenhaus der Lady Florence.* Filmgalerie 451, 1975. https://www.filmgalerie451.de/de/filme/das-totenhaus-der-lady-florence
[262] Ibd.

towards formats that do not require traditional forms of acting and allow for the interaction with a more immediate form of physical reality, long before the diagnosis of lung cancer, which, as Nina Schmidt argues, introduces a phase of "the artist's deliberate reframing of his work in the light of his experience of illness."[263] I agree with Sarah Ralfs, who claims that Schlingensief has always striven towards the "transgression between art and life"[264] and whose "late work cannot be seen in isolation or as a break with the rest of the œuvre."[265] While his own non-acting and the "repeated employment of lay actors" [266] in the case of his earliest films (visibly working on the premise of no or very low budgets) might have been necessary rather than conceptual, the recurrence of amateur, random, and non-acting actors in his later films, and even more so in his performances, theatre plays, operas, and opera projects, testify for intentionality. In this regard, the earlier works already reveal a tendency that became more and more tangible over the years and culminated in his later work: an interest in the human body as the producer of signs and bearer of meaning, even when it does not *do* anything, strictly speaking, when it is not "productive" but just "there."[267]

In all of these regards—the interest in lay actors and the use of his own body—*Please Love Austria* is exemplary for Schlingensief's work. Realized in 2000, it was developed at a time when the artist had just been written off by German media as a failure, as "fertig, kaputt, [...] aus, vorbei"[268] —after his half-serious and relatively unsuccessful attempt to launch his own political

[263] Nina Schmidt. *The Wounded Self. Writing Illness in Twenty-First-Century German Literature.* Camden House, 2018, p. 118.
[264] Ralfs, *Theatralität der Existenz,* p. 12.
[265] Cf. "Das Spätwerk Christoph Schlingensiefs möchte ich keineswegs isoliert von oder als Bruch mit seinem übrigen Werk begreifen, im Gegenteil." Ibd., p. 14.
[266] Koch, Lars. "Christoph Schlingensiefs Bilderstörungsmaschine." *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, Vol. 44/173, 2014, pp. 116-134, p. 121.
[267] For more information on the debate, cf. especially Schlingensief's projects on unemployment and his many performances in which physical presence alone – e.g. in a lake at which a political leader is spending his vacation – formed the aesthetic and conceptual premise. Cf. "Baden im Wolfgangssee." https://www.schlingensief.com/projekt.php?id=t014
[268] Schlingensief. *Ich weiß ich war's*, p. 92.

party, the "*Chance 2000.*"[269] *Please Love Austria*, however, made Schlingensief popular beyond the realms of his own country and earned him unprecedented success as an artist. Indeed, Schlingensief's sudden international recognition seems to directly relate to his own act of crossing the borders. While it is commonly understood that *Please Love Austria*'s success rooted in the performance's ability to intervene in a particular political situation, and by appropriating a particular and relatively new medial aesthetic to draw attention to identities to be found only at the margins of representation, lesser or no scholarly attention has been given to an act of border-crossing that preceded the performance: that of a *German* body crossing over to *Austria*. My analysis shall investigate how Schlingensief, by quietly centering the performance around his body in particular, not only exposed himself as "objectifiable" [270] in the sense of vulnerable, attackable but simultaneously seized what being *foreign among foreigners* offered to him as a performer. I will show how Schlingensief, performing xenophobe hate speeches in the middle of Vienna, incessantly gestured himself into being the most and least foreign body on site.

States of Exception

> "In einer Situation, wo jeder schaut: na, was ist jetzt in Österreich wirklich los? Ist das jetzt ein faschistisches Land oder nicht?"[271]
>
> (Dr. Helene Partik-Pablé, FPÖ)

[269] Cf. "Chance 2000. " https://www.schlingensief.com/projekt.php?id=t014
[270] Ralfs, Sarah. *Theatralität der Existenz*, p. 12.
[271] Helene Partik-Pablé, describing her perspective on the situation Austria was in after the elections in 1999, and when Schlingensief developed the performance, cited in Poet, *Foreigners Out!*

On October 3, 1999, German Unification Day, coincidentally, national parliamentary elections were held in Austria. The results caused a massive political landslide with a far-right nationalist party coming in second of the popular vote. The outcome of the election shifted the small country quite abruptly into the focus of international attention: "Xenophobia Triumphs in Austria's Historic Poll" (*The Scotsman*)[272], "Rightist Party Gains in Austrian Elections" (*Washington Post*)[273], "Far Right Tears Up Austria's Political Turf" (*L.A. Times*)[274] —the astoundingly vast repertoire of articles sounding the alarm over Austria's election results leave no doubt about the seriousness with which the results were discussed around the globe. The international community's unexpected interest in Austria's national politics and the apprehension in the face of the electorate's shift to the right is to be explained in two ways. Firstly, because the shift had followed, almost immediately, Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995, and was thus read as a direct affront against the Union itself. And secondly, because the Austrian election results were unprecedented in the history of Europe after the Second World War. It raised important questions regarding Austria's largely unaccounted-for past: the absence of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung"[275] within the history of the Second Republic.

In contrast to Germany, Austria's own fascist past, including the four years of Austrofascism preceding the country's annexation to Nazi-Germany, and the country's active

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[272] Cited in Heather Berit Freeman. "Austria: The 1999 Parliamentary Elections And The European Union Members' Sanctions." *Boston College International & Comparative Law Review*, Vol. 25, no. 1, 2002. DOI: https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/law/lawreviews/journals/bciclr/25_1/04_FMS.htm

[273] Ibd.

[274] Ibd.

[275] To this day, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" is almost exclusively connotated with Germany and the Germans' efforts to come to terms with the Nazi past and legacy. While its efficiency and thoroughness in the German context have been – legitimately – scrutinized, for the longest time, the discourse around "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" has been completely absent in the Austrian context. Cf. Mohler, Armin. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Von der Läuterung zur Manipulation.* Seewald, 1968.

participation in the Second World War was never adequately accounted for, and the process of denazification was never implemented to the same degree as it had been in Germany.[276] The lingering effects of Austria's victimization myth originating from the Moscow Declaration[277] led to relative continuity after the war. A large number of former Nazi officials were allowed to keep pursuing their profession. The policy of forgiving and forgetting, propagated by both of the two larger parties who, up until the 1990s, would reign the country in coalition for the majority of the time, led to decades of relative political stability, but also the phenomenon that would later be dubbed the culture of "Kellernazis" ("basement Nazis"), referring to the dark figure of national socialists—and eligible voters —still entirely in favor of the old regime, although not articulating their anti-democratic opinion openly.[278]

Austria's "Freedom Party," the "FPÖ" ("Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs"), was the—at first small—party to offer regressive political forces a platform within the legal, democratic spectrum and framework. Founded in 1956, just a year after Austria had regained political independence, with former, high-ranking NS-officials (including one ex SS-Brigadeführer) as the first heads of the party, the FPÖ provided refuge for the aforementioned "basement Nazis." Presenting themselves as a "national liberal alternative to the main Austrian parties,"[279] the FPÖ had ever since been known for its revisionist ideology, its protagonists' nationalist rhetoric (deliberately reminiscent of

[276] In contrast to Germany, the allies deferred the execution of measures towards the state's denazification to the Austrian administrations already in 1946, paving the way for extremely lenient policies. Cf. "Die Entnazifizierung." in Margit Reiter. *Die Ehemaligen. Der Nationalsozialismus und die Anfänge der FPÖ.* Wallstein Verlag, 2019, pp. 17-24.
[277] Cf. Allyson Fiddler. *The Art of Resistance. Cultural Protest against the Austrian Far Right in the Early Twenty-First Century.* Austrian and Habsburg Studies, Vol. 21, Berghahn, 2019, pp. 17ff.
[278] Journalist Hans-Henning Scharsach called FPÖ politician Barbara Rosenkranz "Kellernazi" in a NEWS article from 1995. After she sued for "defamation," a verdict by the European Court of Human Rights pronounced him not guilty and sustained his compensation claim. Cf. "'Kellernazi': Scharsach durfte Rosenkranz so nennen." *Der Standard*, November 14, 2003. https://www.derstandard.at/story/1481574/kellernazi-scharsach-durfte-rosenkranz-so-nennen
[279] "Freedom Party of Austria," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, page was last edited on 14 January 2021, URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Party_of_Austria.

German nationalism), and for its xenophobic politics. Yet, and even though it had briefly participated in one government formation in the 1980s, up until the 1990s the party had never been quite big or significant enough to stir international attention. It was not least because of a considerable shift in the party's staffing that gave its popularity the necessary boost—and fame beyond the country's borders.

In 1986, Jörg Haider was elected the FPÖ's new head of the party. His leadership introduced a period of continuous popularization of the party. Throughout Haider's regime, the FPÖ, which used to hover around 5% in general elections,[280] grew steadily and reached the aforementioned peak in the elections of 1999.[281] The FPÖ's success throughout the eighties and nineties is generally attributed to two key factors: an extremely xenophobic and racist campaign that both of the centrist and established parties, afraid of losing voters, failed to counter and, more importantly, Jörg Haider himself. Haider, with his "personality and his suntanned, telegenic appearance,"[282] his "management of fickle emotions and perfunctory impressions,"[283] his successful self-stylization as avHarvard-educated, worldly statesman,[284] and particularly his undeniable talent as a rhetorician, managed to draw votes from across the spectrum of the Austrian electorate. Notoriously defensive of the NS regime, Haider's political program managed to reconcile causes from across the political spectrum. He also embodied the perfect combination of German and

[280] Cf. the results of Austria's legislative elections in 1983, the last one before Haider became the leader of the Freedom Party. "1983 Austrian Legislative Election," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, page last edited on 1 November 2020, URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1983_Austrian_legislative_election.
[281] Günter Bischof and Fritz Plasser. *The Changing Austrian Voter.* Contemporary Austrian Studies, vol 16, Transaction Publishers, 2008, pp. 106f.
[282] Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak. "'Aliens' and 'Foreigners': The Political and Media Discourse about the Austria First Petition of Jörg Haider and the Austrian Freedom Party in 1992 and 1993." *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism.* Routledge, 2001, pp. 144-204, p. 199.
[283] Bischof and Plasser, *The Changing Austrian Voter*, p. 3.
[284] Cf. Wodak, Ruth and Anton Pelinka. *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*. Transaction Publishers, 2006.

Austrian nationalisms and propagated the idea of one German "ethnic" identity while also insisting on (and embodying) some Austrian particularity. In his article on Haider's politics, written a few years before the elections in 1999, Paul Hockenos cites the politician's political beginnings and reveals how to reconcile "Germanness" with "Austrianness" is one of the primary aspects of Haider's politics—and success.[285]

Had the election results alone caused apprehension by the international community, the party's and Haider's subsequent government participation in the coalition with the centrist-right Conservatives ("ÖVP," the "Austrian People's Party") —who, in their election campaign, had promised not to form a coalition with the Freedom Party —was the final straw and prompted a reaction, not only from the media but from political administrations as well. The inauguration of the far-right/center-right government in February 2000 initiated a series of sanctions against Austria, which further complicated the country's status within the international community, and particularly its relationship with its immediate European neighbors. In her account of the events, Denise Varney states that

> [b]y mid-2000, Austria had become the "pariah state" of Europe. Fourteen member states of the European Union had imposed sanctions against the inclusion of a far-right party in a governing coalition. Other Western democracies, including the United States, recalled their ambassadors, temporarily, in protest.[286]

[285] Citing the politician with a mock-endearing, and "Austrianized" version of his first name, Hockenos writes: "Young Jörgl began his political career at the age of 16 with a presentation to the ultra-right Austrian Sports Club titled, 'Are we Austrians Really German?' His conclusion: *jawohl*, we are." Cf. Hockenos, Paul. "Jörg Haider: Austria's Far Right Wunderkind." *World Policy Journal,* Vol. 12, no. 3. Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 75-80, p. 79.
[286] Denise Varney. "'Right now Austria looks ridiculous': Please Love Austria! – Reforging the Interaction between Art and Politics," *Christoph Schlingensief: Art Without Borders*, edited by Alexander Kluge. Intellect Books, 2010, pp. 105-122, pp. 105-106.

Varney further quotes Madeleine Albright, in 2000 US Secretary of State, who voiced her concern and who publicly justified the sanctions the US and other countries imposed on Austria. In her impassioned speech, Albright found clear words that leave no doubt about the seriousness with which the developments in Austria were met:

> We are deeply concerned about the Freedom Party's entry into the Austrian government. [...] There is no place inside the governments who make up the Euro-Atlantic community—and a healthy democracy —for a party that does not clearly distance itself from the atrocities of the Nazi era and the politics of hate.[287]

Apart from, perhaps, the 1986 affair around the revelation of Kurt Waldheim's military record,[288] there has been no comparable situation in Austria's international standing and reputation. And while in present days, far-right governments are a common phenomenon throughout the West and its democracies, at the time, the FPÖ as lead and shaped by Jörg Haider held a unique status within the European context. Even today, Haider is considered the founding father of modern right-wing populism and as a precursor to parties such as the AfD or politicians as Donald Trump.[289] At the time, however, Haider's tactics and rhetoric—and particularly his astonishing success within a national state—were new and prompted a debate around "Austrian exceptionalism."[290] Jörg Haider and his Freedom Party's success triggered the question whether,

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[287] Statement by Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, cited in Sean D. Murphy. *United States Practice in International Law, Volume 1: 1999-2000*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 18.
[288] Cf. for instance Cornelius Lehnguth. *Waldheim und die Folgen. Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich.* Campus Verlag, 2013.
[289] Cf. Al-Serori, Leila. "Der Mann, der den modernen Rechtspopulismus erfand." Süddeutsche Zeitung, October 8, 2018, URL: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/10-todestag-von-joerg-haider-der-mann-der-den-modernen-rechtspopulismus-erfand-1.4156739.
[290] Andrei S. Markovits. "Austrian Exceptionalism: Haider, the European Union, the Austrian Past and Present." *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*. Transaction Publishers, 2006, pp. 95-119.

due to the country's unwillingness and inability to account for its own past, such extreme right tendencies coupled with an affinity for strong, authoritarian leadership, were to be considered a typically *Austrian*—and not, or no longer, a *German*—trait.

Paradoxically, all the sanctions, the international communities' efforts and statements, and even the debate around Austria as an exception ended up strengthening Austria's political right. Confronted with the reaction to their government participation, the FPÖ succeeded in reviving the victimization myth in a different context: by portraying themselves as the victims of illegitimate persecution and by citing the democratic nature of the elections of 1999. With Haider's ability to present far-right and extremist views as socially acceptable and the party's insistence on the — correct—fact that they had been elected democratically, the party managed to further increase their popularity within the country. The effect was evident to the degree that it required the international community to eventually backtrack, as Murphy recounts, in his analysis of newspaper reports that analyzed the impact of the sanctions:

> After a specifically appointed panel reported that EU sanctions had become counterproductive by encouraging the very xenophobic attitudes they were intended to punish, the EU states in September 2000 lifted their diplomatic sanctions.[291]

The critical opposition in and outside of the country, it seemed, were kept from taking action effectively. While within the country, weekly protests would continue to bring thousands of people to the streets of Vienna (referencing the famous "Montagsdemonstrationen" which had preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall, these marches were dubbed "Donnerstagsdemonstrationen") these

[291] Murphy, *United States Practice*, p. 18.

protest marches—unlike their famous German precedents—brought no political change and, by mid-2000, had devolved into a self-sustaining rite.[292] This paradoxical kind of impasse, where national forms of protest proved ineffective, and international measures even counterproductive, sets the scene for Schlingensief to import—himself.

A Prelude.

In his autobiographical notes, Schlingensief devotes a chapter to his memories of the *Please Love Austria* and the many lucky coincidences that led to its realization. He started developing the concept for a container in Vienna after Luc Bondy had invited him to contribute to the *Wiener Festwochen*[293] —a prestigious Austrian art festival. The context of the *Festwochen* and its particular tradition and profile highlight the local and national framework the project was enabled by but that it also sought to confront. To obtain approval, Schlingensief and Bondy were required to introduce the project to local municipal authorities, as the *Festwochen* are financed by public funds. In his recount of the necessary bureaucratic steps in Vienna, Schlingensief describes the meeting with former district mayor Dr. Richard Schmitz, a conservative. Before Schmitz granted them the—highly visible and in just about all aspects ideal—space in front of the opera house as the location for container and performance, Schmitz, according to Schlingensief, refused a couple of their (more modest) suggestions with the words "Joooa, naaa, des mach ma net … jooa, naa, des auch

[292] For further information on the "Donnerstagsdemonstrationen" and various other, smaller protest forms erupting at the time, please refer to Allyson Fiddler. *The Art of Resistance. Cultural Protest against the Austrian Far Right in the Early Twenty-First Century.* Austrian and Habsburg Studies, Volume 21. Berghahn, 2019.

[293] This annual Viennese festival with a tradition dating back to 1927, allowed Schlingensief's container project to form a contrast to the cultural highlights that the Festwochen usually produced: operas and operettas, musicals, and, with a few exceptions, very classical theatre productions. Cf. "Wiener Festwochen," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, last edited February 9 2021, URL: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiener_Festwochen.

net"[294] —a statement that, within the course of his narration, forms the pivotal moment of suspense, but, because of the author's mimicking of some idiosyncratically Austrian dialect, simultaneously the scene's humorous punchline.

Three men in a Viennese office, discussing the best location for a container and a sign reading "Foreigners Out!"; one of the men Swiss, one German, and one Austrian. Their conversation happens in their shared language, German, but it is the Austrian's dialect that gets marked as distinct. The scene—as filtered through and retold by Schlingensief—is, I believe, revealing and encapsulates the powerful absurdity of the constellation that should later get further complicated throughout a six-day performance. The Austrian, within the given context in a Viennese office the only national, holds the authority, but, in turn, is being made fun of and becomes subject to subtle othering from the side of the foreign author whose spoken language is closer to the written standard. This begs the question—why? Does Schlingensief simply employ a naturalist gesture here to illustrate the scene and make the character of Viennese Schmitz more tangible for his readers? Maybe. And at the risk of over-interpreting a scenic description that was merely intended as a humble acknowledgment that without a good deal of luck and cooperation from the local officials, *Please Love Austria* could never have happened, I will argue that this little prelude, as retrospectively described by Schlingensief, points out the relevance of linguistic and dialect-related gestures for the project itself. The subsequent readings will show how *Please Love Austria's* many foreign protagonists, among them Schlingensief, all of whose "German" was necessarily filtered through their differently foreign bodies, challenged the status quo of the

[294] Schlingensief, *Ich weiβ ich war's*, p. 87.

political discourse in a way that made the critique the performance produced eminently difficult to counter.

A Foreword.

It would, of course, be wrong to reduce the complexities *Please Love Austria* presents us with by claiming that it revolves around language or linguistic gestures alone. Quite obviously, its multi-media layers and the performance's incorporation of various non-textual requisites, not to mention its doubling of the concept of *Big Brother,* constituted, as Varney says, "a complex and paradoxical *Gestus*"[295] and that one can try to tackle the performance from various angles. At the same time, it is plain to see that Schlingensief—equipped with "Megaphon und Mikrophon"[296] —and his canny play with language are the very centerpiece of the performance. The political context is important because it created a political power discourse that Schlingensief sought to attack—yet, simultaneously, exploited. It is, in this regard, not a coincidence that the first scandal the play produced—before the container was even installed—revolved around a *fore-word*: a word, leaked to the press, in anticipation of what was to be expected.

It was the performance's title that Schlingensief had initially suggested: "*Erste europäische Konzentrationswoche*" ("First European Concentration Week") —an all but subtle reference to the Nazi's concentration camps, the "Konzentrationslager"—a move that the Austrian newspaper *Kronenzeitung* immediately scandalized.[297] After massive pushback by a range of conservative and

[295] Varney, "'Right Now Austria Looks Ridiculous,'" p. 115.
[296] Wolfgang Ruppert. *Künstler! Kreativität zwischen Mythos, Habitus und Profession*. Böhlau Verlag, 2018, p. 348.
[297] Cf. Lilienthal and Philipp, *Schlingensiefs Ausländer raus*, p. 12.

right-wing Austrian politicians, who were horrified at the thought of what such a title for a publicly financed and highly visible art project would do to the reputation of the country, *Festwochen* director Bondy—publicly—put Schlingensief in his place and decided to appease the critics from the political establishment. He announced that the title would be changed to "*Erste europäische Koalitionswoche*" ("First European Coalition Week.")[298] Leaking the original title beforehand, however, most likely in full anticipation of it getting rejected, ensured that both titles would circulate. With this unofficial foreword, simply enough, the connection between the two words "coalition" and "concentration" —and by that, *this* coalition and the Nazi's political measures—was cemented and, even though no longer official, irrevocable.

Establishing and circulating certain affinities between words or collocations—here, by playing on unfortunate assonance—is a simple and effective strategy in political discourse. It is one of the favorite rhetorical tools of politicians, particularly populists from the extreme right. [299] It also links Schlingensief's performance to the history of interventions by Austrian "Nestbeschmutzer." Connotated first and foremost with Thomas Bernhard[300] and Elfriede Jelinek,[301] Schlingensief in fact quotes both artists. Jelinek, as we will see, would actually personally get cited *to* the site of the performance, to assume the role one of the most important contributors, and Bernhard is quoted by means of the foreword itself. Bernhard, with his "accidental" leaking of the key to his roman à clef—the name of the real-life person who served as template for the main protagonist in the text

[298] Cf. Tara Forrest. *Realism as Protest: Kluge, Schlingensief, Haneke*. Transcript, 2015, p. 81.
[299] For a contemporary US American reader, Donald Trump's rhetoric may come to mind. He has perfected the strategy and pushed it to new extremes by focusing on individual opponents rather than causes ("crooked Hillary" or "sleepy Joe" being two very obvious examples). Cf. for example Todd Gitlin's analysis in William Cummings. "Analysis: Trump is a Master of Language." *USA Today*, February 17 2017, URL: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/02/17/trump-rhetoric-techniques/97463770/.
[300] "Thomas Bernhard: Geliebter Nestbeschmutzer." *Die Presse*, September 10 2017, URL: https://www.diepresse.com/5282878/thomas-bernhard-geliebter-nestbeschmutzer.
[301] Pia Janke. *Die Nestbeschmutzerin. Jelinek und Österreich.* Salzburg: Jung und Jung, 2002.

Holzfällen—just before the book was released, initiated a similar scandal.[302] Retractions, these performances show, are speech acts that the boulevard press cannot deliver.

In the given historical context of the late 90s and early 2000s in Austria, Schlingensief's foreword is, in addition to the act of quotation, to be understood as a direct attack on the FPÖ's, and particularly Jörg Haider's weaponized use of language. For Haider, too, made use of the logics of the boulevard and used it to his advantages. He was well known for his rhetorical talent and his manifold contributions to the political discourse which—at times, and due to pressure from advocates of political correctness—he had to take back, but which he had thus successfully added to the Austrian public's vernacular. In his brief recount of Haider's many memorable phrases, Gstättner writes:

> So war jahrelang von "roten Nattern" und "schwarzen Ratten" oder "Schädlingen" die Rede, von "lichtscheuem Gesindel, Filzläusen und Lumpenpack", "lendenlahmen Bundespräsidenten", vom "Tugendterror der Gutmenschen", von "Fäkalkünstlern und Nestbeschmutzern", von "subventionsabhängigen Lemmingen", Sozialschmarotzern oder von den "Nichtstuern des Südens" von denen "die Fleißigen, Ehrlichen und Anständigen" in Schutz zu nehmen seien.[303]

Schlingensief made it clear that he knew about the "harmful albeit diffusive effects"[304] of hate speech and that his project sought to show what these slogans imply. But *Please Love Austria* did not only publicly "act out"[305] the political agenda Haider's words promised. The staged drama

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[302] Volker Weidermann. "Wie wahr darf Kunst sein?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 3 2007, URL: https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/belletristik/wie-wahr-darf-kunst-sein-1438968-p3.html.
[303] Egyd Gstättner,"Die Geschichte vom kleinen Mann und den Kampfkeulen (1999)" *Der Haider Jörg zieht übers Gebirg. Quergedanken, Gegenreden und Zurückweisungen in einer dunklen Dekade.* Drava, 2013, pp. 21-30, pp. 21f.
[304] Eric Heinze. *Hate Speech and Democratic Citizenship.* Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 137.
[305] Cf. Schlingensief, "Politik durchspielen," *Ich weiß, ich war's,* pp. 88-104.

around the performance's title shows how the project itself went way beyond that, as it did not eschew an appropriation of the opponent's means. Schlingensief himself made use of "infectious, virulent rhetoric"[306] and relied on the boulevard's medial machines and shamelessly sourced the mechanics of populist discourse and its lasting effects on language.

These two occasions of a "prelude" and a "foreword" exemplify the play's affinity to language and linguistic games. An analysis of the performance(s) on site, however, requires a closer look at the specific bodies expressing these and other messages; idiosyncratically, and at times by displaying linguistic mistakes and language particularities. Evidently, the character of an open performance, with its numerous sub-performances and appearances by artists, politicians, and public intellectuals, and the direct involvement of the general public drew countless bodies to the event site. To systematize the events on site, I differentiate between three different (groups of) acting bodies: the "chorus" of asylum seekers, the "protagonist" Schlingensief, and the public "audience" that served as an echo chamber to the events on site.

Foreigners. A Chorus.

> Es ist völlig eigenartig, dass keiner, auch keiner von den Journalisten, irgendeine Frage zu den Asylbewerbern stellt. Man hat sich damit abgefunden, dass das Schauspieler sind. Das ist aber eben nicht so.[307]

[306] Felton-Dansky, Miriam. *Viral Performance: Contagious Theaters from Modernism to the Digital Age*. Northwestern University Press, 2018, p. 144.
[307] Schlingensief. *Ich weiβ ich war's*, p. 95.

In his recount of a press conference that was part of the performance, Schlingensief—with an air of accusation—recalls that "nobody, none of the journalists even, asked a question about the asylum seekers."[308] Even worse—every one of the journalists present seemed to assume, wrongfully, that these asylum seekers "were actors."[309] Schlingensief's two-fold indignation over the reception of the participants of the performance is remarkable. Why were the asylum seekers in the center of the performance never interviewed by the press, not even on site? Why did they have to be silent? — Did they really have to be silent? — *Were* they silent? It seems that the performance aimed to prove two things: that these were "real" foreign bodies, and that they *did* speak—but that they would do so in a distinct way.

The relationship between the asylum seekers and the public was and remained ambiguous. On the one hand, they were positioned in the container, the center of surveillance, and their every move was, in accordance with the Big Brother model, broadcasted live and displayed on screens outside the container. On the other hand, the container served them as a physical shield from the public sphere of bodies present. It would have been hard for the press to actually approach them—not to mention interview them—as they rarely appeared in public.[310] While the voyeuristic (as opposed to a communicative) access to the people inside the container was given, certain measures were put in place to secure some their privacy and protect their identities, which forms an important difference to the Big Brother model. When appearing in public and outside of the container—for example, the day they collectively moved in, or in the event of a deportation—the participants were accompanied by bodyguards, and dressed in hoodies, colorful wigs, large

[308] Ibd., my translation.
[309] Ibd., my translation.
[310] The only way in which direct communication was made possible, was through the small peepholes drilled into the walls of the container. Yet, and just as intended, these peepholes ended up being used mostly for voyeuristic purposes.

sunglasses, and other costume-like attire.[311] On the webpage, which contained biographies of each of the contestants, their headshots were blurred and their faces made unrecognizable. The same pictures were also displayed around the container; mugshot-like posters attracting attention but carefully protecting individual identities with black bars to cover large parts of their faces.

This ambiguity points to some key elements. While the new formats of reality TV such as Big Brother sought to individualize their contestants—for example by adding separate interview sessions to give the audience a chance to develop sym- and antipathies and choose their favorite—*Please Love Austria*'s contestants were not individualized to that same degree. In the supplementary material such as the website, they were listed with a name and nationality, and introduced with basic biographical data[312] but on site, they never appeared as individuals unless, of course, in the case of a deportation.[313] On site, they assumed the role of what Ulrike Haß in her studies called a "heterogenes, vielstimmiges Konglomerat,"[314] a heterogenous and polyvocal formation resembling that of a theatrical chorus. Reading the group of asylum seekers as chorus rather than actors makes sense in various ways. Firstly, it offers a different perspective on the question that traverses even scholarly literature on the performance "—were the asylum seekers real or fake? —"[315] and secondly,

[311] With the help of sub- and intertitles, Poet's documentary informs the viewer that the asylum seekers had been recruited from refugee centers, that all of them had ongoing asylum procedures, and that exposing their identity would threaten their status as well as the chances of getting a positive decision on asylum in Austria. Cf. Poet, *Foreigners Out!*, 6:30-7:00.
[312] Written in stylistic imitation of Big Brother's boulevardesque jargon, these biographies would introduce the contestants as "echte Partylöwin," "Queen," or as "körperbewusst[er] Familienmensch." Cf. Lilienthal and Philipp, *Schlingensiefs Ausländer Raus*, pp. 20, 24, 68.
[313] One could argue that the deportations aimed for a deindividualization of the contestants as well. Firstly, they were usually getting removed in pairs, and secondly, Schlingensief, who announced, conducted and commented the deportations, frequently referred to them by their nationality or their skin color. "Ah, Österreich hat wieder einen Schwarzen abgeschoben." Cf. Poet, *Foreigners Out!*
[314] Ulrike Haß. "Die andere Geschichte des Theaters." *Orte des Unermesslichen. Theater nach der Geschichtsteleologie*, edited by Marita Tatari, Diaphanes, 2018, pp. 77–90, p. 77.
[315] Varney, "'Right Now Austria Looks Ridiculous,'" p. 111.

it scrutinizes the myth of the "stummen Asylbewerber" [316] some other scholars base their observations in. The group of asylum seekers, I believe, need to be recognized as participants beyond a real/fake binary and as all but silent.

The job as a contestant for *Please Love Austria* was undoubtedly busy. Unless you got deported early on, it implied a 24/7 week-long schedule. While the "Schirmherren" —some famous politicians and artists who served as collaborators and patrons for the performance—took turns, and each of them was in charge of and only present throughout one day, the asylum seekers, along with Schlingensief, were some of the few bodies who remained on site for the duration of the performance. In fact—and this is also reminiscent of the theatrical chorus—they were the very first ones on site. Quite obviously, without them, the container and the space would not have assumed significance, they "gave" and "offered" the space for the action, in line with what Haß writes: "Der Chor eröffnet den Schauplatz."[317] In other words: it was the group of real foreign bodies *inside* the container that formed the literal basis of the stage *on top of* the container. The space thus carried by the chorus created the platform which Schlingensief and other performers, such as each of the designated patrons, could then use to appear, to speak, and to present themselves, their art or, for instance their political ideas individually.[318]

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[316] Cf. Koch's claim that the asylum seeker's silence was conceptual: "Indem sie die stummen Asylwerber in die Kunstproduktion einbezieht, lässt sie in der ästhetischen Erfahrung die Möglichkeit einer anderen sozialen und politischen Vergemeinschaftung aufscheinen, die eine neue Aufteilung des Sinnlichen und eine andere Politik der Sichtbarkeit als (utopische) Möglichkeit aufruft." Koch, Lars. "Christoph Schlingensiefs Bilderstörungsmaschine." *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, Vol. 44/173, 2014, pp. 116-134, p. 133.

[317] Ulrike Haß. "Die zwei Körper des Theaters. Protagonist und Chor." *Orte des Unermesslichen. Theater nach der Geschichtsteleologie*, edited by Marita Tatari, Diaphanes, 2018, pp. 139–159, p. 142.

[318] Haß lays out how the ancient chorus emerged as pre-condition for individuals to appear as single subjects, and to speak on stage. "Ohne seine [des Chors] Raumspende hätte der Protagonist im griechischen Theater keinen Ort, er könnte noch nicht einmal auftreten." (Ibd.)

While members of the group inside the container did not interact individually with the audience or with the press, they did express themselves chorally: in movement and sound. The chorus's tasks included two routines that were repeated at least once daily, either on top or in front of the container, visible to whatever parts of the public (spectators, tourists, passersby, press) happened to be present. These routines entailed sports and German lessons. On the one hand, this kind of activity surely sought to parody the bitter realities of asylum seekers in Austria (and other places): their subjection to disciplining from the side of the authorities —the sports lessons were conducted and directed with a microphone and military imperatives—and that mandatory German lessons and tests were part of the preconditions for attaining rights of residence. On the other hand, the collective movement and chants—German classes were also conducted in unison—reinforced the impression that this was the work of a theatrical chorus.

On June 14, 2000, Elfriede Jelinek, a long-term friend and collaborator of Schlingensief's, assumed patronship for the day. It may come as no surprise that, rather than putting herself at the center of attention, she used the day to work mostly behind the scenes[319] and to engage with the chorus. Over the course of one afternoon, she and the group co-created a theatrical play with texts written by the contestants and roughly edited and arranged by herself.[320] Later in the day, the play was performed behind the wall right outside the container; making use of the architecture of the place, the space provided ideal conditions for a classical puppet theatre. The selection of puppets—a "Kasperl" (a Punch-like clown figure particular to the Austrian and South German puppetry

[319] In a surveilled space, what happens "behind the scenes," is relative. Jelinek and the contestants sat outfront the container, in an outdoor area still shielded from the public, but with one camera mounted on top, so that their movements but not their exact words could be observed.

[320] The script is available as pdf on the website documenting the performance. "Ich liebe Österreich," montiert von Elfriede Jelinek aus Texten der Asylanten von "Bitte liebt Österreich!"mit Hilfe von Mario Rauter. Wien, 14. 6. 2000. Im Rahmen der Aktion "Bitte liebt Österreich!" – Erste europäische Koalitionswoche von Christoph Schlingensief, URL: https://www.schlingensief.com/downloads/jelinek_ich_liebe_oesterreich.pdf.

repertoire), a Princess, a King, a Crocodile, and a few more characters—assembled classical figures known from a popular Austrian children's TV format, the "Kasperltheater." Concept and aesthetics of the TV format were appropriated, however, the didactical impetus of the classical version for children were subverted. While a "Kasperltheater" would usually teach an easily graspable and uncontroversial moral lesson to the underage audience on and off the set, Jelinek's brief theatrical montage—the complete written script is only about two pages long—sacrifices a clear-cut message to an aesthetics inspired by Dadaist montage techniques.

As introduction to the staging, Jelinek briefly appeared the top of the container, the stage, to explain the conceptual frame:

> [...] Ich hab gesagt es soll jeder ein paar deutsche Sätze, die sie wissen,
> aufschreiben und wir haben aus diesen paar deutschen Sätzen –
> deutschsprachigen Sätzen – ein Stück montiert, das für Kasperltheater ist.[321]

The script, as she explains, consisted of a collage of sentences the asylum seekers knew in German. Jelinek's casual self-correction when introducing the project—she corrected "German sentences" to "sentences in German"—is obviously significant. Unlike most of the other famous foreigners on stage (including, of course, Schlingensief but also other artists and politicians such as Gregor Gysi, Blixa Bargeld, or Jelinek herself), none of the performance's primary contestants, the asylum seekers, spoke German as a primary language. Unsurprisingly, the script, which was only lightly edited, is imbued with common grammatical mistakes and contains a whole series of linguistic ambiguities. More specifically, the language quotes "Infinitivdeutsch," a variation of the standard

[321] Elfriede Jelinek, documented in Poet, *Foreigners Out!*

that is associated with the 1960s and 1970s Gastarbeiter culture. Here, and with the help of the puppet identities, the language within the play is explicitly mapped onto Austrian, German-speaking subjects, particularly politicians. This, for one, yields comical results but it also illustrates the fact that simplified forms of German are not just inferior versions of German, generated by foreigners learning the German language, but in fact a linguistic "compromise between [...] simplified forms and the German speakers' ideas of simplification."[322] The Crocodile, for example, who appears as the first puppet on stage, introduces herself with the words: "Ich bin Frau Magister Heidemarie Unterreiner. Ich wollen einen schönen Tag. Und alles österreichische Menschen."[323] Unterreiner, at the time the Freedom party's culture spokesperson, was also one of the most adamant critics of the performance. The ambiguity of the performance situation and the lack of substantial narrative context leave it open, whether Crocodile "Unterrainer" talks like that because (on an intradiegetic level) she is addressing the foreigners she sees herself surrounded by, or because of her own (extradiegetic) illiteracy, and the fact that this is how people remember her to speak.

In contrast to some of the puppets' satirical self-identification as high-ranking politicians, the collection of sentences some other puppets present revolve around being foreign or wanting to be Austrian. The anaphoric repetition of "Ich," "I," in this discussion is misleading: the contestants do not actually speak about themselves but present themselves subjects of a certain repetitive discourse, as shown by this collection of sentences, all uttered by "Gretl" at various points throughout the play:

[322] Michael Clyne. "Zum Pidgin-Deutsch der Gastarbeiter." *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, Vol. 35, iss. 2. Franz Steiner Verlag, 1968, pp. 130-139, DOI: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40500502.
[323] "Ich liebe Österreich," p. 2.

> Ich will sein frei weil das Welt ist und alle haben recht. [...] Ich lebe gern alles. Das ist ein schöner Tag. Bitte helfen Sie mir, ich liebe Österreich. [...] Ich will nicht negativ Kampf, wir haben viel Schmerzen mit alles, das wir hier haben in Österreich. [...] ich nix wollen Krieg – wir sind alles Menschen. [...] Ich möchte in Österreich bleiben. Ich möchte Arbeit.[324]

The staging, evidently, added to this message and highlighted the fact that this was a play about "being foreign." All the contestants, who during the evening rendition of the play animated one or more of the puppets from behind the fence, spoke with accents and their German was immediately identifiable as produced by a body foreign to the language. However, and this is quite important, all distinctive features of everyone's particular foreignness were blurred. Again, the idea of a choral voice applies: the contestants made themselves heard as choral group of foreigners, as one polyvocal foreign voice, without the audience being able to pinpoint particular identities, to judge people by their appearance or the color of their skin, or to make out single linguistic identities.

The only temporary "identities" left, were satirical assumptions of roles of Austria's public figures, such as "Crocodile" culture spokesperson Unterreiner and "Kasperl" chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel. As Knapp and Pogoda note, the playful montage subtly challenged the notion that Austrian politicians were able to speak German correctly:

> Während Schlingensief Denkweisen ans Licht brachte, die ohnehin vorhanden waren, forderte Jelinek den Einwand heraus, Österreichs Politiker könnten aber richtiges Deutsch sprechen. Die Äußerungen der Ausländer im Container [...] wurden zu Worten der Politiker [...]. Schlingensiefs ironischer Aufforderung,

[324] This is a selection of some of "Gretl's" utterances. More and more puppet characters begin to echo these grievances, cf. "Ich liebe Österreich," pp. 2-3.

> Österreich doch bitte zu lieben, diese Liebe kundzutun und Konsequenzen aus ihr zu ziehen, gingen die Kasperl in Jelineks kleinem Stückchen mit gutem Beispiel voran.[325]

In a way, the puppet play forces the viewer to ask whether Austrian's politicians just speak a different kind of "incorrect" German, or where the distinction between correct and incorrect lies. Grammar? Inflection? Dialect? "Aussprache?" The impression of a mélange of spoken varieties of and in German intensifies as, gradually, the puppet identities dissolve (or quite literally incorporate each other as when, towards the end, the Crocodile devours Gretl.)[326] The puppets' voices increasingly merge, phrases are repeated and echoed in variation, especially phrases containing "I," and "love," and "Austria."[327] The play ends on a phrase everyone joins in, until, as the instructions of the script note, the chorus collectively runs out of steam: "Alle gemeinsam: Mein Gott, der arme Wolfgang! *(bis keiner mehr Lust hat)*"[328]

Elfriede Jelinek's texts have become emblematic for the modernization of chorus literature.[329] Though it is not her first choral piece, her contribution to *Please Love Austria* reads as rehearsal for later projects, such as *Die Schutzbefohlenen*,[330] where themes such as nationality and the nation state, flight, and statelessness, or asylum-seeking are explored by choral voices. In these later texts, in which refugees appear on the stage in choral, polyvocal formations, speaking almost every

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[325] Lore Knapp, Sarah Pogoda. "Christoph Schlingensiefs Grenzüberschreitungen. " *Germanistische Mitteilungen* Volume 41:1, 2015, p. 75 – 89, p. 81. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33675/GM/2015/
[326] "Ich liebe Österreich," p. 3.
[327] According to Jelinek, quoted by Knapp and Pogoda, the phrases "Ich liebe Österreich" ("I love Austria") and "Helfen Sie mir!" ("Help me!") were those, most of the contestants had already known in German. Cf. Knapp and Pogoda. " Grenzüberschreitungen," p. 81.
[328] „Ich liebe Österreich," p. 3.
[329] Renate Gyalpo-Rosdol. *Von Aischylos zu Jelinek. Vom antiken Chor zu den Chor-Dispositiven gegenwärtiger Szenarien.* Akademiker Verlag, 2019.
[330] Elfriede Jelinek: *Die Schutzbefohlenen.* (14.6.2013 / 8.11.2013 / 14.11.2014 / 29.9.2015), URL: https://www.elfriedejelinek.com/fschutzbefohlene.htm.

line in unison, the subjects of the communal text are, as, ironically, the announcement of one staging of *Die Schutzbefohlenen* explicitly notes, essentially interchangeable ("Besetzung variabel.")[331] This comes with a double (and perhaps unintended) meaning. The announcement says that throughout the different stagings the actors vary, that they are interchangeable. Yet, and more importantly, the wording "variable" reflects on how the real subjects that Jelinek's choral voices echo are equally read as interchangeable. The discourse that Jelinek picks up with her text thus spans the advertisement of the staging: as foreigners, text and announcement argue, these subjects are looked upon in a de-individualized manner and find their voice only in polyvocal choristry.

The same logic applies at the site of *Please Love Austria*. The contestants become a chorus because, as asylum seekers, they are not granted the same privileges as Schlingensief, or even "real" Big Brother contestants who present themselves to an audience as individuals and are (made) recognizable as such. In the context of the right's fear-mongering—that there are myriads or "waves" of people, an indistinguishable foreign mass threatening to cross the borders[332]—the chorus, as employed here, offers a group of de-individualized subjects the possibility to speak. With that, the chorus of foreigners also exposes the roles these individuals have to assume in order to speak at all. It is particularly in this regard that the accents the actants' bodies produced when speaking German assume significance. Not the German sentences they "picked up" along the way, but their collective production of a heterogenous voice of foreignness, imbued their message with meaning.

[331] Cf. the play's announcement by Rowohlt Theaterverlag: https://rowohlt-theaterverlag.de/tvalias/stueck/3143517
[332] Cf. Farukh Sauerwein: "Von Flüchtlingen, Geflüchteten und Refugees: Sprache über Flucht und Asyl. Dokumentation des Einführungsworkshops im Deutschen Exilarchiv 1933–1945 der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek in Frankfurt am Main." Kiwit, 2018. URL: https://www.kiwit.org/media/material-downloads/190628_hkw_kiwit_frankfurt_onlinepdf_press.pdf.

To the Austrian ear, the accents these bodies inevitably produced, verified their collective identity as "foreign."

Foreigner, der unsere Sprache spricht.

In Austria, Schlingensief's body was foreign, too. In stark contrast to the merging bodies of the chorus, however, Schlingensief's demeanor on and off stage made it clear that he was central to the performance and that, in many ways, he commanded the performance *Please Love Austria* to revolve around him. "Der absolut beste Film über mich!"—"Definitely, the best film about me!" — was, as quoted on the DVD cover, Schlingensief's reaction to Paul Poet's documentary of the performance.[333] The lack of context or commentary on this particular quote leaves it up to interpretation to read the statement as ironic or sincere. Either way, the cult Schlingensief created around his persona throughout the piece is hard to miss. While he certainly had many collaborators, it was he who conceptualized the piece and spent all week on site; it was he who held countless press conferences, issued statements, and gave interviews and explanations beyond the duration of the performance itself. While a certain self-centeredness is hard to deny, it falls short to reduce all of these efforts to narcissistic showmanship or to a clever strategy to promote his work. Rather, Schlingensief's deliberate self-stylization is in itself significant, and it allowed him, as I will show, to use his own body as means for critique.

For one, *Please Love Austria* granted Schlingensief the stage to embody a central leader figure of the type that right-wing parties often owe their success to. This was primarily achieved

[333] Poet, *Ausländer raus,* – DVD Cover.

through the appropriation of rhetorical behavior. On site, but also in interviews on TV, Schlingensief would assume the role of the charismatic leader, making sure cameras were directed at him, and copying rhetorical strategies of politicians the critique was directed against. Certainly, the clever usage of the media apparatus (already illustrated by the "foreword") amplified everything he said, and every scandal he produced, but the performance would not have succeeded without Schlingensief's own efforts: his talent—and willingness—to talk in non-stop excitable monologues, to repeat and variegate simple messages and lies, and to churn out obnoxious, but very memorable phrases—all without a given script, and essentially impromptu. This allowed him to reveal the absurdity of such blatant and empty rhetorical demeanor, while he also carried the performance with it.

A memorable scene unfolded when, on the second day of the performance, Schlingensief accepted the invitation to join a round table discussion on Austrian public TV.[334] Culture spokespersons of three political parties were present to discuss the crisis the performance had caused: the conservative Andreas Salcher, Friedrun Huemer from the Greens (as member of the opposition), and, most notably, FPÖ politician Unterrainer, (who, just the next day, would involuntarily reappear in Jelinek's puppet play as the Crocodile.) The debate started in a relatively calm manner, with Schlingensief, encouraged by the moderator, briefly explaining the idea of the project. When the moderator then turned to the other participants, however, the discussion almost immediately devolved into a cacophonic disaster because Schlingensief would interject as soon as FPÖ representative Unterrainer attempted to make a point. Ignoring all talk show decorum, Unterrainer and Schlingensief, both equally offensive and loud, talked over each other

[334] Christoph Schlingensief. "ZIB3 Diskussion zu 'Ausländer raus!'" last accessed 14 February 2021, URL: https://vimeo.com/14325237

ruthlessly—for minutes—and left the rather helpless moderator unable to intervene. The scene testifies that Schlingensief was very capable of appropriating rhetoric moves and strategies of the populist politicians. He deliberately escalated the situation by disrupting his opponent(s), by raising his voice to a level that made it impossible for anyone else to be heard, and by effectively repeating a completely unfounded and nonsensical accusation. The accusation, most likely, was the only information viewers would have been able to take away from the show: that Unterrainer, as Schlingensief would reiterate time and again, could not possibly know anything about art, because she had never been to a theater.[335]

A heavily abridged version of the roundtable is also part of Poet's film. In a series of parallel cuts, the documentary illustrates how Schlingensief never stuck with one mode of speaking but that he knew how to move his rhetoric between a range of discourses. His utterances spanned a theatrical mode on site, in the reproduction of Haider's most racist slogans, to critical and confrontational rhetoric as in the TV talk show just discussed. It also included vicious questions or insults to single members of the audience as well as thought-through and levelheaded meta-reflections on the piece in interviews during and after the performance. It is important to note that, essentially, all of these modes are manners of speaking one can acquire through training and practice.[336] And while the ability to produce impromptu hate speeches in a performance situation or on live TV might not come "natural," it is, too, a manner of speaking that can be learnt and that, in theory, could be reproduced by anyone. I will argue, however, that also Schlingensief's

[335] "Sie waren doch noch nie im Theater!" was the phrase Schlingensief repeated in variation.
[336] Schlingensief claims to have studied populist politicians' rhetoric tricks to appropriate them for the confrontation on TV.

body, as the carrier of these hate speeches, mattered. Not necessarily because of the exact words this body said, but because of *how* Schlingensief's body made them heard.

This is where Schlingensief's own linguistic identity—which was simultaneously read as his national identity—assumes relevance. A German in Austria, Schlingensief moved already between categories. Sharing a language as well as substantial parts of history and culture, a considerable difference between the two nations' political cultures lies, as I laid out, in their different ways of dealing with their fascist and Nazi past. In Austria a foreigner himself, Schlingensief's "Foreigners Out!" was not just adding an ironic twist to the slogan, it also accounts for the provocation his action posed even to Austrians who claimed to be against the Freedom Party, deportations, and xenophobic politics in general. The film documents a number of scenes in which, with the contestants in the container an indistinguishable assembly of foreigners, Schlingensief himself was called out as *German* foreigner, even by people who appeared to be leftists. As one enraged person yelled, "asylum seekers' hostels were being burnt to the ground" in Germany, something that, as another said, "would never happen in Austria." [337] Schlingensief, they suggested, should kindly shut up, attend to these German—"*your*"—problems and leave—"*us*"—Austrians to take care of their own. [338]

Apparently, Schlingensief's critique, even when it was perceived as necessary per se, was impossibly hard to take—from a *German*. To Austrians, Germany has ever since held a double status, simultaneously perceived as foreign to as well as part of the Austrian identity. This manifests itself in a very complicated and contradictive form of stereotyping and name-calling—

[337] Cf. Poet, *Foreigners Out!*, particularly minutes 38:00-39:30.
[338] Ibd.

"Piefke" being, perhaps, the most popular one[339]—which the performance, and especially Schlingensief as a person, triggered. Indeed, Schlingensief was not only openly racist in his reproduction of the FPÖ's hate speech, but deliberately offensive towards Austrians, too. He provoked the most hostile responses by yelling things like "die superdummen Österreicher haben eine superdumme Regierung gewählt,"[340] which was perceived as a more direct attack than the general, and perhaps more obviously insincere polemic against foreigners. In contrast to the—disproportionately more hurtful and horrible—hate speech against all foreigners, the insults against Austrians were not perceived as a joke or quotation. This explains why nobody was interested in the exact national identities of the foreigners inside the container—these did not matter—but why the debates on site immediately heated up, whenever Schlingensief's national identity was cited.[341] One passerby called Schlingensief an enemy of Austria ("Österreichfeind!"[342]) and various people explained why Schlingensief did not deserve to be here, and that it was him, not the people in the container, who deserved deportation. One elderly spectator stirred up the performance when she, after insulting Schlingensief using crude and abusive language, tried to start a chant that summed up the absurdity of the constellation. For minutes, she tried to get everyone to yell it with her: "Ausländer rein! Piefkes raus!"[343]

While Schlingensief may have triggered some Austrians' trauma of being insignificant second to their internationally much more relevant German neighbors, his Germanness is

[339] For a brief explanation of etymology and history of the term, cf. Anton Karl Mally. "Warum werden die Bundesdeutschen von Österreichern 'Piefke(s)' genannt? *Der Sprachdienst*, Vol. 54, 2010, pp. 147–157.
[340] Cf. Schlingensief, documented in Poet, *Foreigners Out!*
[341] An important factor in creating Schlingensief's Germanness was the Austrian Newspaper Kronenzeitung. Fixating on Schlingensief's nationality, it would emphasize the fact that he, as foreign artist, would receive money from the Austrian state for his defamatory work. Cf. ibd.
[342] Ibd., 38:38.
[343] Ibd., 48:00.

important in yet another way: regarding the Freedom Party's, and in particular Jörg Haider's very own play with language. Schlingensief's aforementioned posing of the charismatic leader was, after all, directed specifically against equally charismatic Jörg Haider as a person. Haider's charisma, however, was intricately linked to the way he spoke—and in that, not only to the rhetoric he applied, but also to his gestural performance of dialect. In his excellent analysis of Haider's success, Anthony Bushell writes that

> Haider had found a political rhetoric that allowed him to reach out and connect effectively with the right wing of the Austrian electorate, to exploit latent xenophobia [...], to ignore the long-standing taboo of discussing National Socialism by making revisionist comments [...]. Haider was also an accomplished platform speaker and was always able to turn a memorable phrase in good Austrian rather than in bureaucratic High German.[344]

Haider, whose rhetoric talent, as Egyd Gstättner puts it, suggested being casually xenophobic without being perceived a national socialist—"jenseits alles Nationalsozialistischen fremdenfeindlich und kunstfeindlich und damit populistisch und irgendwie lässig zu sein"[345]—did not speak German—but, to borrow and reiterate Bushell's words, "good Austrian." With that, Haider's language introduced an important difference. It is a well-known fact that "dialect performance is related to identity construction,"[346] and politicians, regardless of their party or affiliation, as soon as they speak in public, are subject to an evaluation of that particular performance of their language. This can certainly be used to one's advantage, since, as Bassiouney

[344] Bushell, Anthony. *Polemical Austria. The Rhetorics of National Identity: From Empire to the Second Republic.* University of Wales Press, 2013, p. 229.
[345] Gstättner, "Die Geschichte vom kleinen Mann," p. 21.
[346] Reem Bassiouney. *Identity and Dialect Performance: A Study of Communities and Dialects.* Routledge, 2018, p. 1.

argues, "an individual's linguistic choices are not just natural but performed and at times a result or reflection of a wider conflict with a specific government or ideology."[347] In other words: one can implicitly distance or align oneself with a cause or an ideology by using or amplifying a particular inflection or dialect. Jörg Haider seems to have understood that principle very well. Based on the premise that language and identity are "linked to place,"[348] he had successfully developed a manner of speaking that, rather than sounding overly complicated, out of touch, or bureaucratic—or *German* German in any way—was perceived as approachable, as local, as "language of the people."[349]

Haider's way of communicating always strived to express that he was on one level with his voters, yet it was the result of a strategic affectation. Born in Upper Austria, the success of his political career began with his entry into Carinthian party politics. In Carinthia, he served as "Landeshauptmann" twice; once from 1989-91, and again in 1999 up until his death. Before that, however, he had spent a few years in Vienna, where he received his doctoral degree in law. Upper Austria, Vienna, and Carinthia all have different dialects. To kick off his political career in the south of the country, Haider assumed a strong Carinthian dialect, and made sure that the way he addressed his eager listeners would never betray the fact that he had a law degree. Though the stronghold of his votership remained based in Carinthia, the elections of 1999 reflect the party's success on a national scale. Haider's performance as Carinthian-Austrian had become iconic and credible to a degree that had even admiring party members started to mimic his dialect and

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[347] Ibd.
[348] Urszula Clark. *Staging Language. Place and Identity in the Enactment, Performance and Representation of Regional Dialects*, de Gruyter, 2019, p. 1.
[349] Emo Gotsbachner. "Talking about Jörg Haider: How 'Volksnähe' became a major criterion for the assessment of politicians." *Political Leadership, Nations and Charisma,* edited by Vivian Ibrahim and Margit Wunsch. Routledge, 2012, pp. 143-158, p. 149.

inflection (—though not always with immediate success, as the critical press would gloat.)[350] The fact that Haider's language still bore residues of other Austrian dialects, such as the Upper Austrian one he grew up with, did not hinder his success. If anything, it helped him. The fact that he could, if necessary, move between various Austrian dialects, gave him the image of being and speaking "pan-Austrian"—a perfect, relatable embodiment of "Austrianness."

This explains how Schlingensief's body was—effortlessly—able to spoil Haider's discourse simply by doubling it. While the entire performance, as Tara Forrest notes, "simultaneously affirmed and disrupted Haider's alignment of popular culture with neo-conservative politics,"[351] Schlingensief's own foreign body added the necessary surplus. Schlingensief—a German—blatantly performing Haider's racist slogans and juxtaposing "the disembodied voice of Jörg Haider"[352] that was sometimes played from records on site with his own voice, saying the very same things, easily ridded the phrases off their "good Austrian" softness or apparent innocence—and, as I would argue, reintegrated them into the discourse and rhetoric of the National Socialists. Had it been Haider's project to wash some phrases clean and, with the help of a soft southern Carinthian twang, make them fit to (re)enter the political discourse, Schlingensief's technique of simple quotation, reversed Haider's revisionism and put the language on display for what it was. Haider's self-advertisement as "Einer, der unsere Sprache spricht"—a slogan that, due to its success, has since been appropriated and variegated by conservatives and new FPÖ leaders alike[353]—was appropriated

[350] Werner Schneyder. "Die Sicht vergeblicher Satire." *Die Zeit*, 8 October 2018, URL: https://www.zeit.de/2018/41/werner-schneyder-satire-rechtspopulismus-joerg-haider?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F.
[351] Forrest, *Realism as Protest*, p. 79.
[352] Varney, "'Right Now Austria Looks Ridiculous'", p. 110.
[353] Cf. Peter Münch. "Wer hat's erfunden?" Süddeutsche Zeitung, 29 August 2019. URL: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/oesterreich-fpoe-kurz-kickl-1.4580544.

by an all but welcome "foreigner who speaks our language," and whose mouth rendered all of the language's unpleasant sides audible.

One can certainly question whether, other than making use of its natural way of pronouncing words, Schlingensief's body was truly significant in any way and, somewhat related, if any of this was indeed *his* "success" or "achievement." Clearly, Schlingensief was in the center of the events, and many parts of the performance were attached to his moving body rather than to the site of the container. Yet, and while Schlingensief's body was certainly exposed, and might even have been in physical danger at times,[354] the performance's success did not hinge on the deliberate employment of bodily gestures. Schlingensief did not, as Anselm Kiefer and others had had, for example, openly associate *his* body with the Hitlergruß, *the* gesture of national socialism.[355] In fact, his body—on site and in interviews alike—never quite lost its very own idiosyncratic gestural vocabulary; his body moves, essentially, the same way it did when he first appeared on film as a fourteen-year-old. As a white, ordinary-looking male, Schlingensief exploited the fact that, within the context an overwhelmingly white society, nothing distinguished him from the rest, and he used his gestural expression to support that—by not doing anything remarkable at all, by being just there. Delivering almost everything he said on site calmly, sometimes monotonously, he never used his hands for anything but the necessary: to hold a microphone, for example, or a bottle of water.

Perhaps, Schlingensief's markedly reduced employment of obvious gestural action or using his body to quote offensive like he quoted offensive words betrays the fact that his body, was,

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[354] In an interview, Schlingensief admits that there were fears of a terrorist attack on the performance members cf. Poet, *Foreigners Out!*

[355] Cf. Arnds, Peter. "'Send in the Clowns.' Carnivalizing the Heil-Hitler Salute in German Visual Culture." *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany. Text as Spectacle.* Edited by Gail Finney. Indiana University Press, 2006, pp. 235–248.

compared to the more obviously foreign bodies, never really on the line. The stakes for a white, German body, free to cross borders to another country of the European Union—or pretty much any other country it pleases—are, even if it does its best to be offensive and unlikeable, comparably low. Any white, cis-male, able-bodied German, can rely on the fact that, no matter which borders he crosses, he will find himself in a comfortable position of privilege, superiority, even. The later, at least, the notion of superiority, was also encapsulated in Schlingensief's lingual gesture: that—even if he did not "do" anything except for saying what has been said before, if he reduced his body's gestural activity to a minimum, he would still, naturally, come across superior, as a foreigner who speaks the language—even better than the locals, perhaps!—and whose critique is enabled by his privilege.

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Please Love Austria depended on the "location and 'liveness' of the event,"[356] on the particularity of the political situation, as well as Schlingensief's "Fähigkeit zur Präsenz,"[357]—a serendipitous constellation that already questions the performance's suitability as exemplary model. As has been shown, a relatively detailed knowledge of Austria's political situation at the time is necessary to understand the performance's ambiguous accomplishments, its peculiar impact, and, most importantly, in its uniqueness and unrepeatability. The more important argument against its status as model, however, lies within the particularity of the constellation of German-speaking bodies and bodies speaking German which the performance organized. Against Peter Seller's (and perhaps

[356] Ibd., p. 108.
[357] Wolfgang Ruppert. *Künstler! Kreativität zwischen Mythos, Habitus und Profession*. Böhlau Verlag, 2018, p. 348.

other artists') hope that some "*Please Love Austria* in Chicago and New York,"—places, where the political situation was or seemed comparable at various points—might fix, or at least disrupt the situation in a similar manner, I doubt that the piece can be used as a template for successful artistic combat against populist politics. Quite on the contrary, the piece is—or at least for now has remained—irreproducible.

I have shown how Schlingensief's German German-speaking body was in itself an intervention into a particular conversation between Austria, Germany, and the international community. This is why I argue that Schlingensief served as more than just (generally replaceable) commentator, spectator, or facilitator of a feedback loop.[358] His own body—quite literally on top of a sum of other-foreign bodies—produced triggers that disarmed critics from across the political spectrum. While the "chorus" of foreign bodies were, as Varney puts it "necessarily 'typical' subjects,"[359] and used their collective voice to reproduce, spoof and corrupt the German language with the help of their foreign-sounding bodies, Schlingensief's immediate and audible legibility as "German" singled him out as foreigner of a different kind.

I therefore agree with Friedlander, who argues that the piece "point[s] to a radical democratic sphere in which the illusion of inclusion depends on the exclusion of bodies and identities that antagonize the given system."[360] However, and this is important: it really only "points to" that sphere. The piece certainly neither offers nor enables it, and one can rightfully

[358] "Schlingensief tritt selbst als rahmenbrechender Kommentator auf die Bühne und agiert dabei als Beobachter zweiter Ordnung, der – häufig ausgerüstet mit einem Megaphon als Medium der Störung – die Reaktionen der Zuschauer auf das Bühnengeschehen kommentiert und im Sinne einer Feedbackschleife kommunikativ dynamisiert." Cf. Koch, "Bilderstörungsmaschine," p. 120.
[359] Varney, "'Right Now Austria Looks Ridiculous,'" p. 112.
[360] Jennifer Friedlander. *Real Deceptions: The Contemporary Reinvention of Realism*. Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 64f.

question whether Schlingensief had anything positive to contribute at all.[361] This creates an almost Leviathan-like constellation: with the performance revealing itself as gesture (pointing to what could be) that is in itself made up of bodies' gestures. Not the territory or the (German) language delineates the border between "foreign" or not, but the gestures of the bodies crossing them.

[361] This certainly distinguishes Schlingensief from some of the other contributors such as the aforementioned Peter Sellers, who interpreted the performance as productive event, or politicians who came to the site to hold speeches, such as (German) Gregor Gysi or (Austrian) Peter Pilz.

Chapter IV: Texting Gestures

> Le texte ne « commente » pas les images. Les images n'« illustrent » pas le texte : chacune a été seulement pour moi de le départ d'une sort de vacillement visuel, analogue peut-être à cette perte des sens que le Zen appelle un *satori* ; texte et images, dans leur entrelacs, veulent assurer la circulation, l'échange de ces signifiants : le corps, le visage, l'écriture, et y lire le recul des signes.[362]
>
> (Roland Barthes, *L'Empire des signes*)

In August 2014, the British journalist Alex Clark posted an opinion piece in the English newspaper *The Observer* on the subject: "Emoji: the first truly global language?"[363] Proceeding from personal experience and a discussion of her very own everyday usage of digital communication, Clark then raises the question of the alleged universality of emoji communication. While she leaves the implicit questions—are emoji universal or not, are they even to be considered a language?—ultimately open, the newspaper's caché does not: the article is now retrievable via a link that reads "How Emoji Became The First Truly Global Language."[364]

Clark's article is relatively early evidence of a discussion that, over the past few years, has slowly shifted into focus—not only of opinion journalism and small talk, but also of the academic debate. Ever since their launch into the Unicode system in 2009,[365] giving way to their steadily growing popularity, emoji have begun to pervade academic discourse, as scholars from various

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[362] Barthes, Roland. *L'Empire Des Signes*. Éditions Du Seuil, 1970.
[363] Clark, Alex. "How Emoji Became the First Truly Global Language." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 31 Aug. 2014, www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/aug/31/emoji-became-first-global-language.
[364] Ibd.
[365] "Emoji Timeline. A timeline of cultural and technical events in the history of emoji," URL: www.emojitimeline.com/.

disciplines discovered their appeal. The incessant expansion of emoji's vocabulary and its status as international tool of digital communication for the masses have led to an abundance of articles and analytical studies on the subject—by linguists, philologists, sociologists, communication scientists and others,—all published within very recent years.

While small articles or cross-disciplinary references to emoji literature are widespread, scholarly monographs focalizing on emoji alone, are comparatively rare. Due to the topicality of this phenomenon-in-flux and in lieu of "emojiology," its theoretization mainly lives on blogs, in comments and other short formats "on the internet," so to speak, as scholars from somewhat related academic disciplines (and I will not exclude myself here) tend to handle emoji with care. Emoji's alleged ephemerality and its constant development through its usage seems to make it better fit as reference, as pop-cultural and perhaps all-too-fleeting example for a special, but not all too interesting side note to human communication, a curiosity, the long-term impact of which is yet to be determined.

There are exceptions, however, and throughout my own investigations I will cite two monographs on emoji in particular, one written from a linguist's, and one from a semiotician's perspective: *The Emoji Code*[366] by Vyvyan Evans, and *The Semiotics of Emoji*[367] by Danesi Marcel, both from the year 2017. The two studies present different perspectives and foci, but—most likely because of the proximity of their times of publication, but also due to the authors' similar socialization and background in Anglo-American academics—they often cite the same incidences of

[366] Evans, Vyvyan. *EMOJI CODE: the Linguistics behind Smiley Faces and Scaredy Cats*. PICADOR, 2018.
[367] Danesi, Marcel. *The Semiotics of Emoji*. Bloomsbury Academic, An Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017.

emoji use, or name the same milestones in their popularization, for example the first election of an emoji– "😂" –as word of the year 2015 by the *Oxford Dictionary*.[368]

While I certainly do not intend for a study on scholarly reception of the emoji, recent scholarship *on* the subject (that seeks to analyze it, but not to develop the medium further, that is: abstains from its expressive, communicative usage), and these two studies in particular, will help me point out two problems I see in the debate—problems that relate emoji to more general questions of semiotics and semiosis but also, as I shall argue, to the relationship between bodies and text. The following quote, taken from Evans' *Emoji Code*[369] is indicative for the prevalent scholarly approach to emoji—and the problems I see arising with it. Evans delivers a short history of glyphs and pictogram communication and also takes close looks at pragmatic usage of the emoji, but in its essence, the book reads as comparative study between what he describes as today's two global means of communication: the English language and emoji.

> Emoji is, today, incontrovertibly the world's first truly universal form of communication. Given that English is often said to be the world's global language, to make the point clear, a comparison with English is a highly instructive point of departure.[370]

Two things strike me as important in such writing on emoji. Firstly, Evans' and other scholars' seemingly unquestioned "point of departure": the comparative juxtaposition of emoji and (English) *language*, as opposed to any other semiotic system. Secondly, and perhaps slightly related, the seemingly nonreflective substitution of "global" with "universal" (and vice versa) in these

[368] Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, URL: www.en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2015.
[369] Evans, *EMOJI CODE.*
[370] Ibd, p. 20f.

tentative descriptions of emoji communication, along with the assumption that "globality" and "universality" are both what emoji stand in for, represent, create, and affirm. In essence, both of these premises and lines of argumentation ignore what I think the rise of emoji is at least *also* indicative of, namely the wish—and impossibility—to bring the body into writing and communication, even in its literal absence.

In the following passages, and with the help of a few examples, I will 1.) try to introduce a history of the emoji—as developing out of language and communication, but *not* the word, necessarily, and 2.) investigate emoji's function as marker of "globality" striving for some universality it can never attain. This will help us to recognize emoji as a present-day examples for gestural expression—dating back to a long tradition of gestures in text—and to better understand why and where they fall short, as they rely on the premise of "the body" as universal object.

Writing Emoji: The Problem of Inequivalence

In discussions of so-called new media and its tools, it is all but uncommon to use language as default medium of reference. Within academic discourse, language is not sole medium of description of any subject at hand, but when it comes to new media, often, linguistic structures serve as metaphor to explain how in the digital realm information is materialized, transferred and received—perhaps most famously so when it comes to coding. The idea of computer codes as being another, rapidly advancing language group, and programming a particular mode of writing,[371] thereby tends to establish a hierarchical system and implicitly demands programming codes to strive towards attaining the complexity of natural languages. This paradigm is only slowly beginning to get challenged, for instance by scholars who radically question this very genealogy and show how writing—and thus our understanding of language—changes through the cultural technique of coding.[372]

Still, language, and generally mostly the English language, forms the context in which "new" communicative tools, such as emoji, are not only found, but frequently get measured against. But this unquestioned standard of the message as text-message ignores two things. Firstly, that our text messages, even when sent and received in writing and thus perceived of as "purely textual," depend on coding and decryption to be communicable, which certainly complicates the question of the relationship between primary and meta medium for it is no longer clear if

[371] The Columbia Encyclopedia, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018, CredoReference, URL: http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.credoreference.com%2Fcontent%2Fentry%2Fcolumency%2Fprogramming_language%2F0%3FinstitutionId%3D1878.

[372] Cf. for instance Vee et. al. who investigate the co-constitutive nature of coding and writing. Vee, Annette. *Coding Literacy: How Computer Programming Is Changing Writing*. The MIT Press, 2017.

"primary" is the phenomenon, the text we write and read, or if it is the carrier (a text messaging service for instance) whose "language" is hidden, and has been "written" never to be "read." Secondly, prioritizing the linguistic content of a message and focusing on what is written alone, ignores that writing, even pre-digital writing, necessarily creates spaces *in between*, and that any text also consists of that which is not written down, but there by implication. Emoji are in both of these regards interesting terrain. The question, I think, is not where, how and why literal language at times gets enhanced or replaced by signs of different kind—an emoji for example—but to what degree that emoji had been there all along, not in form or shape perhaps, but in intention, allusion and intimation.

Another problem arising with comparison between modes of writing is that of hierarchization. Within the comparative debate, the fact that the "point of departure," language itself, is far too complex to be subsumed under one description, is generally acknowledged. Nobody will, at this point, disagree that language consists of too many contradictive and diverse elements to allow for a thinking in wholistic schemes. Such wholistic schemes are, however, still employed—and, assuming a strictly logocentric perspective, rightfully so—when it comes to emoji. That, "[i]n contrast to English, Emoji has a far, far smaller 'vocabulary,'"[373] and that it is thus "highly impoverished compared to any natural language,"[374] and that lining up emojis next to each other "hardly counts as some kind of 'Emoji grammar,'"[375] are all diagnoses that reveal how, more often than not, the purpose of comparing language to emoji is not the thorough critique of two

[373] Evans, *EMOJI CODE*, p. 85.
[374] Ibd.
[375] Ibd, p. 89.

different semiotic systems, but rather a way to point out what emoji, entirely measured by linguistic standards, can*not* (yet) do or achieve, be it in terms of content, style or complexity. Such comparisons—emoji vs. language—are certainly not per se wrong, of course, but they are limiting. Contrastive juxtapositions of English and emoji, as shown by Evans and others, certainly do not only point out shortcomings, but also specific surplus qualities of both forms of communicating, while expanding our understanding and definition of "communication" as such. However, the premise of comparability or even direct translatability from language to emoji or the other way around, upholds, I argue, a fictive binary, while missing the point of emoji, its pragmatic usage, as well as emoji's history, their intent, their potential.

To dismantle a logic of substitution or equivalence—the idea emoji could or should (some day or in some contexts) replace written text entirely—it serves to look at a couple of examples. The neo-dadaist[376] project *Emoji Dick* for instance, a complete translation of Herman Melville's classic, *Moby Dick*, into nothing but emoji characters,[377] is, in this regard, a clever examination of semiotics based on an idea equivalence. As ambitious kickstarter project launched in 2009, *Emoji Dick* picks up the debate of universal translatability—of Western canonical literature, coincidentally—in the exact year emoji was first launched in Unicode and by that internationally send- and receivable.[378] Here is an example, the famous first sentence of the book and its emoji "equivalent".

[376] I understand the attribute "dada" here not as synonym or reference to nonsensical art, but to art as critique-of-the-medium and its nonsensicality, which links the project to those of the historic dada-avantgarde. Cf. Forcer, Stephen. *Dada as Text, Thought and Theory*. Legenda, 2015.

[377] Melville, Hermann. "Emoji Dick, or: 🐳." Edited and Compiled by Fred Benenson. Translated by Amazon Mechanical Turk, URL: www.emojidick.com/.

[378] As the Unicode consortium is the authority who defines the spectrum of emoji vocabulary that is internationally send- and receivable, emoji's development before and after Unicode is hardly comparable. While for projects such as Emoji Dick the details are less important, I will focus on Unicode's function in the universality debate.

Call me Ishmael.[379]

The sentence "Call me Ishmael" is perhaps indeed legible and would, as picture puzzle, be solvable by a fair amount of people. This is of course simply due to the fact that "Call me Ishmael" has already and for decades been subject to all sorts of quotation and is, as sentence, part of the repertoire of the Western canons. Evidently, this prior knowledge through other forms of decontextualization is not the case for the overwhelming majority of Melville's text and other narrative passages are fairly impossible to get right without the respective translation at hand. But it is exactly through its mockery of the idea of perfect translatability between word and emoji itself, that makes *Emoji Dick* a clever contribution to the debate. While priding itself to be "astoundingly useless,"[380] it really extrapolates the absurdity of operating within a logic of literal substitution when it comes to emoji as medium.

As the artistic gimmickry of *Emoji Dick* or also similar projects, such as translations of famous quotes into emoji, [381] or "emoji lyrics"[382] show, "translating" emoji back to language can be entertaining but does not essentially enhance our emoji competence, as emoji were never really intended to and are, pragmatically speaking, rarely made to serve as exact substitute for words or text. Establishing referential relationships between word and emoji—especially when done so in an unexpected or creative way—is undoubtedly source of amusement and there is something to be said

[379] Quoted via Shea, Christopher. "Text Me, Ishmael: Reading Moby Dick in Emoji." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 1 Mar. 2014, www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/text-me-ishmael-reading-moby-dick-emoji-180949825/.
[380] Alex M., Boingboing Net Commenter, quoted on "Emoji Dick;" *Emoji Dick*, www.emojidick.com/.
[381] Freeman, Jennifer. "Do You Speak Emoji? Translate These Well-Known Quotes." *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, 21 Aug. 2018, www.dictionary.com/e/s/emoji-quotes/#%E2%9D%8C%EF%B8%8F-%F0%9F%98%A2-%F0%9F%94%9A-%F0%9F%98%80-%E2%9C%A8%E2%9C%A8%E2%9C%A8.
[382] Stevenson, Doriean. "Can You Guess The Song By The Emojis? Page 3." *MetroLyrics*, 4 Aug. 2015, www.metrolyrics.com/news-gallery-can-you-guess-the-song-by-the-emojis-page-3.html.

for the epistemological curiosity provoked by such emoji rebuses.[383] In my investigations, however, I will largely exclude these artificial usages of emoji as (more or less exact) substitution for a word, as they are neither representative nor indicative for emoji's primary communicative and gestural function.

☺: A History of Gesture in Text

> Q: How do you rank yourself among writers (living) and of the immediate past?
> Nabokov: I often think there should exist a special typographical sign for a smile—some sort of concave mark, a supine round bracket, which I would now like to trace in reply to your question.[384]

When Vladimir Nabokov, in 1969, countered the question of a *New York Times* journalist with a rather sassy answer, he—most likely quite unintentionally—delivered a proto-theory of the emoji that is, even if born out of recalcitrance against the journalist's question, incredibly sensitive and lucid. Nabokov's production of the absent sign by a gradual formulation of thoughts somewhere between speaking and writing, will help me retrace emoji's history alongside written language, parasitic to it, always already there and absent, between and instead of words.

According to Nabokov's own brief preface to the interview from April 1969 which is now available in a collection of talks, chats, and interviews, entitled *Strong Opinions*,[385] he had received journalist Alden Whitman's questions *in writing*, before they had actually conducted the interview

[383] Danesi links these modern rebuses to its origins in the medieval German tradition, cf. Danesi, *Semiotics of Emoji*, p. 89ff.
[384] Nabokov, Vladimir. *Strong Opinions: (A Collection of Articles, Letters, and Interviews)*. McGraw-Hill, 1973, p. 133f.
[385] Nabokov, *Strong Opinions*.

in person. In the preface, Nabokov bemoans the fact that only a fraction of what had been said made it into the *New York Times* article Whitman then wrote—and also excluding the quote at hand.[386] Nabokov's laconic note "I transcribe some of our exchanges," [387] seems to indicate the text's primary function as documentation of a conversation. The mediality of the interview, and of the quoted passage in particular, is relevant, as Nabokov's answer points to some *in between*, some curious absence in writing that has not yet found its medium and prefigures, I would add, emoji's appeal—fifty years ahead of time. Indeed, Nabokov's vision of a written, writeable symbol made out of punctuation marks—paralinguistic signs rather than words—to create a smile instead of and between words—but here also: through words—radically challenges any logics of substitution. This helps to us to debunk the myth of a tradition emoji, as we have seen, are often placed in. What if they in fact are not, and have never been, secondary to the word?

It serves to take a closer look at the passage and the curious absence it creates and points to. A "special typographical sign for a smile." What Nabokov is looking for in order to escape the (surely slightly insensitive and ignorant) request for a self-ranking—"some sort of concave mark, a supine round bracket"—is not a word of any kind, but it is textual and linguistic, it is something one would expect to find in the context of words. Indeed, Nabokov here operates *between* words in more than one way. Firstly, as a writer (who was asked to give a number), he defers to the material quality of the matter he works with: the shape and contour of typed letters and signs. Secondly, he is not lacking a better word here, but he is looking for a way to express something that is, in a way, inexpressible to words—a smile, a specific gesture, an affect, a meaningful silence, a nonverbal answer, in short: his body expressing the very lack of a word. Yet, Nabokov still wants to use the

[386] Whitman, Alden. "Nabokov, Nearing 70, Describes His 'New Girl'." *The New York Times*, 19 Apr. 1969, p. 20.
[387] Cf. Nabokov, *Strong Opinions*, p. 131.

writer's material at hand: brackets, marks, dots and colons. It is the sign itself which suddenly receives attention by a body, and which through that very attention reveals itself to resemble bodily shapes. Just a small alteration within the process of semiosis makes the body-shape of the signs any learnt skill of textual semiosis conditions us to overlook—and has to condition us to overlook—reappear.

The paradox in this particular example of course arises from the fact that here, the search for an apt sign to fit the bodily expression is performed *in* language. Nabokov describes the absence of a grapheme (a supine bracket, a horizontal smile, so to speak, was, in 1969, not part of a regular keyboard) but, in lieu of such an emoticon, he performs the compensation of that very absence via language. In that, Nabokov bemoans the absence of the body (here: smiling) in writing, but simultaneously fills the void the writing process itself generates with descriptive, imperfect, insufficient words. Surely, this paradox Nabokov dwells on is not new but, quite on the contrary, structural part of textual productivity and rooted in the fact that, as Judith Butler puts it, "there is no writing without the body, but no body fully appears along with the writing that it produces."[388] In this theory of writing as a process that perforce makes the body dispensable, all text can hope to deliver are traces of the body in various formations.

These formations, these particular inscriptions of the body into the text, of course, are, as prior chapters have already shown, entirely determined by time, place, body, context, and, lastly, status quo of the objects and material at hand: the possibilities the compensating texture, the medium, provides. Evidently, performed text offers the body a whole spectrum of its realization through text: intonation, rhythm, movement and gesture—the entire repertoire of the "actio"

[388] Butler, Judith. *Senses of the Subject*. Fordham University Press, 2015, p. 28.

process is available. A handwritten script, on the other hand, provides a completely different set of options for bodies to inscribe themselves: especially if written by a hand that itself makes aware of itself—by getting tired or agitated or frustrated with its own style and script for instance—or, at times, even starts to question the writing body entirely.[389] While I cannot discuss either of these examples for textual delivery (performing it, handwriting it) thoroughly at this point, it is important to notice that neither of these options are given in this very situation. The typed transcript of an oral exchange, an interview between two men, both of whom would list "writing" as their profession and field of expertise, is certainly a very specific situation as such. But why is it that particular situation and exchange, between two writers, operating between two media, oral and written, and in 1969, situated also in a historical in-between, with the electronical typewriter being ubiquitous, but the PC just on the brink of its popularization, — why is it in this very specific situation that the isolated sign, a—by itself completely insignificant, non-signifying—typographical bracket, becomes the very texture some body, this particular Nabokovian smile, seeks to map itself onto?

Punctuation.

The incident of Nabokov's performed failure to fully transcribe affective, bodily information exemplifies how bringing the expressive body into language has been part of written language's project long before "emoji" elements became available and part of our textual vernacular. Indeed, bodily expressions in speech, such as the pause, or even speech-accompanying expressions, such as

[389] Cf. Judith Butler's reading of Descartes' meditations and the existential crisis epitomized in the question "How can I deny that these hands and this body are mine?", in Butler, *Senses of the Subject*, p. 17-35.

particular modes and intonations, were, just like the smiley in 1969, not part of a standard text body, as, for a large part of history, text was assumed to be spoken, performed, or at least read out loud. However, and in simultaneity with the development of written and silently read text as the preferred medium to exchange knowledge and information, the expressive body received its first sign, the "punctus," or ".". In charge of communicating an entire number of extra linguistic nuances, the punctus was "used to indicate all kinds of pauses, to introduce quotations, and to separate."[390] If nothing else, the punctus proves that it was written text itself that demanded a sign for its own suspension: the pause, to remind the reader where the delivering body would have stopped to speak, suspended language, if only briefly, to allow the body to breathe, and for sense to be made. In this regard, the fact that "[p]unctuation is a phenomenon of written language, and its history is bound up with that of the written medium"[391] makes these little marks and signs the most useful trace of the body in the text.

The development of a system of punctuation shows how the production of text is also a process of deferring the authority of meaning-making from the body to the sign. Whenever the speaking body—breathing, pausing, intonating, and gesturing—is absent, signs for such extra linguistic activities need to fill in. Evidently, the expressive body demanded more than just a dot and capital letters, more even, than question marks, exclamation marks, or signs to indicate a parenthesis or a pause. This is exactly what emoji will respond to. However, and before emoji could emerge in the form we know and use them today, an important shift had to happen: a new

[390] Parkes, Malcolm Beckwith. *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*. University of California Press, 1993, p. 42.
[391] Ibd, p. 1.

way of creating meaning and of transcribing the body into text. Not a new "punctus" that is, like Nabokov suggested, but a new way of looking at what was already there.

The repertoire of punctuation marks moderately diversified and spread across literal cultures over the centuries.[392] It is, however, the invention and commercial distribution of the keyboard typewriter which fixed a fairly stable (if, to some degree language specific) selection of marks, brackets, signs and symbols accessible to anyone using the device. This very set of signs, already there and available, became the resource for the writer, the user whose intention it is not to invent, inscribe, and conventionalize new signs, but to manipulate them in a way to allow bodies to inscribe themselves through a medium that made them more absent in the text than ever: the emoticon.

Emoticons.

Emoticons are reconfigurations of the linguistic signs provided by the standard keyboard. The view on the isolated sign Nabokov presented—a view, that recognizes the sign as, potentially, smiling (or smirking) at the naif reader—forms the creative premise. Single signs, stripped of their conventionalized meaning and reduced to their mere material form, are redefined as building elements and potential parts of new complexes. The readability of these new complexes, emoticons, depends on the specificity of human perception: the human brain's tendency to recognize faces, humanoid and bodily shapes, and to find them even in inanimate matter. A particular strand of turn-of-the-century psychology, subsumed under the terms "Gestalttheorie," or

[392] Ibd, p. 41ff.

"Gestalt psychology," studied the phenomenon and proved why and how we see complexes or "Gestalten"[393] rather than individual objects, and why we "humanize" shapes we see, and model our perception after what we know. These theories prove helpful when we want to understand why we read emoticons the way we do.

An example of a relatively early and well-known emoticon is "(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)"[394], or the "Lenny Face." According to dictionary.com it is primarily used to "suggest a mischievous mood, imply sexual innuendo, or spam online discussions."[395] This meaning, however, is merely one definition of many, all of which are essentially based on the interpretation of the facial expression, the "Lenny Face" itself. This shows how emoticons do not primarily provide a way to stabilize meaning or avoid ambivalence gained through bodily absence, like the typographical signs initially were intended to, but they shift focus and change our reading towards the extra-linguistic particles of text as the core and center, the text-*body*, itself. Emoticons thus subvert the semiotic process: re-combination and re-interpretation of the signs at hand give way to a new variety (and a whole lot of ambiguity) of meaning. Indeed, the very first emoticons and mini pictograms, sent and circulated before the digital age, were, just like the "Lenny Face," little more than simple stick figures or faces made of punctuation characters, looking slightly different depending on the font used. Their quiet charm firstly lies in the simplistic aesthetics they embody, the fact that technology mimetically reinterprets bodies and expressions of affect as assemblies of hyphens, brackets and dots, while we are en passant taught a different hermeneutical process: not the

[393] Müller, Georg Elias. *Komplextheorie und Gestalttheorie: Ein Beitrag zur Wahrnehmungspsychologie.* Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1923.
[394] Quotation marks not part of the original emoticon but addition by sjs.
[395] Tudury, Leila. "What Does Lenny Face Mean?" *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, 12 Apr. 2019, www.dictionary.com/e/memes/lenny-face/.

meaning of the words, but the meaning of how an assemblage, a complex, or a gestalt of signs looks, becomes the message of the expression.

While computer scientist and Carnegie Mellon's professor emeritus Scott Fahlman is usually cited as the inventor of the typographic smiley—he suggested ending sentences with the assembly of colon/dash/and bracket (either open, for sad, or closed, for happy), a tradition that, after its proposition in 1982 quickly caught on[396]—and forms perhaps a more immediate response to Nabokov's request[397]—the direct precursors of today's growing list of standardized emoji really emerged in the communication practices in the 1990s in Japan, where a growing set of elaborate emotive expressions, like Lenny, also all pieced together from meticulously positioned dashes and signs, increased the spectrum of bodily gestures one could send as or attach to a text message. One can hardly overemphasize the increase in variety and nuance of illocutionary content, and especially the new repertoire of affects and bodily gestures becoming that became available and communicable through emoticon. Nabokov's supine bracket—or even the skeuomorph, classic smiley—are nothing when compared to the variety possible. While Nabokov's "‿"would have most likely been confusing and ambiguous (—especially, of course, to a 1969 newspaper reader, unexperienced with emoticons), emoticons would doubtlessly have helped him to express a whole range of emotions. He could have presented a smirk, much like Lenny's, perhaps at the stupidity

[396] Cf. for instance Webb, Stephen. *Clash of Symbols: a Ride through the Riches of Glyphs*. Springer International Publishing, 2018, p. 31f.

[397] The smiley, as practiced in most writing programs, is a hybrid between emoticon and emoji. Though not coded in this combination by Unicode, to this day, the emoticon combination of a colon and a close bracket or a colon, a dash and a close bracket, will automatically be substituted with a – skeuomorph – smiley face, ☺, specific to the font and/or writing program itself (including this one). While Nabokov's supine bracket would have followed the emoticon logics, the "☺", strictly speaking, does not.

of the journalist's question, or a gracious smile in complete confidence of his own superiority, or, of course, an excusing, friendly smile, in sincere lack of an answer.

Emoticon certainly answered to a particular desire for nuance—if not absolute clarity—in meaning, and today, there is an entire archive of signs to study. Some of them have become part of texting's vernacular, some of them are relatively arcane or culturally specific. Many of them are surprisingly elaborate and complex in their composition, and all but easy to decode for the inexperienced user or without the respective manual at hand.[398] Another internationally well-known and fairly wide-spread example is the "shruggie":

¯_(ツ)_/¯

The shruggie consists of a fixed combination of dashes, marks and brackets that visually rhymes a shrugging gesture. It generally indicates lighthearted indifference or ignorance towards a certain matter. The gestural nature of these emoticons is apparent: particles of text are used to depict (rather than, as in Nabokov's case, describe) bodies in their gestural behavior to produce emotions, affects and other non-linguistic excess by recycling linguistic material that, in isolation, is detached from its linguistic function.

As Nabokov and other incidences of proto-emoticon thought exemplify, the cultural technique of communicating through emoticon emerges out of a two-fold recognition: firstly, the recognition of text's impotence to perform certain expressions that require a body—even those that are, like a smile, pervasive and completely mundane, yet irreplaceable by words. Secondly, the recognition of the sensual, bodily quality of the typographic sign itself. Writing emoticons means isolating the non-verbal, non-literal sign and examining it for its particular shape, its mimetic potential that is

[398] "List of Emoticons," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emoticons.

not determined by its arbitrary, literal meaning —if such "meaning" even exists in isolation, that is—and that does not emerge from traditional semiosis. Emoticons reclaimed the sign's particular shape to re-signify the signifying, yet text-absent body in a different way. Any resemblance to the gesturing body—such as the bracket's resemblance to the smiling mouth—was used to depict the gesture itself, to bring it into writing on a denotative level.

Emoji.

Emoji, even though differing in kind, cannot be understood without this history. It has become evident that, attempts to inscribe the body through text to text—from simple dots and capitalized letters all the way to elaborate emoticons—cannot be separated from the history of the text as such. Understanding punctuation's and especially emoticon's gradual conquest and expansion of the space *between* the linguistic and the non-linguistic realm is important to explain emoji's intent, and their success, but first and foremost their pragmatic function. In a way, emoji serve the old purpose still—when we literally speak of their "punctuation function"[399] or we attribute meanings such as "mood breaks"[400] or when we perceive of them as "mood finals."[401] Emoji, too, are textual *in betweens*, pointing to what text is missing, and has to miss, in order for there to be something to point to. They are neither purely textual nor fully bodily. Emoji's illocutionary force lies precisely within their bodily textuality, within the fact, that they will not, as a stage instruction for example, be exerted, but stay within the written text whose sensual, bodily qualities they were born of.

[399] Danesi, *The Semiotics of Emoji*, p. 105.
[400] Ibd.
[401] Ibd.

While punctuation and emoticons are doubtlessly emoji's precursors, there are important structural differences between emoticon's aesthetic of mimetic, visual rhyming and emoji's skeuomorphic artificiality. Emoticons integrate themselves into the texture given, they are made of the same material, but emoji, at least in their appearance, are not. In their article from 2015, where the authors seek to prove "The Conservatism of Emoji"[402] and their role and function in our societies' commodification of affect, Crawford and Stark argue that "[t]he affective power of emoji can in part be explained not just by their skeuomorphism, but also by their conceptual plasticity."[403] Further, they argue that "[t]o a greater degree than the emoticon, the utility of an emoji lies in the indeterminacy of its pictographic versus iconographic legibility as a signifier of affect, emotion, or sociality."[404]

These findings seem to point to the fact that emoji, in fact, need to be read differently on a structural level. This might be counter-intuitive, especially as many emoticons, including Lenny and the shruggie, have evolved, directly, into emoji: ¯_(ツ)_/¯ turned into 🤷; (͡° ͜ʖ ͡°) turned into 😏. From a user's perspective that means that these gestures and expressions are now *available*—no longer self-made or subjects of copy and paste, like an emoticon—but essentially ready in shape and form and ready to be summoned from the private and personalized keyboard offered by the digital communication device. As especially the example of the shruggie shows, the transition from gestural emoticons to emoji, means anthropomorphization—and with that: gendering, coloring, ethnical specification.[405] Thus, these cases of more or less direct adaptations of certain gestural

[402] Stark, Luke and Crawford, Kate, "The Conservatism of Emoji: Work, Affect, and Communication." *Social Media + Society.* July - December, 2015.
[403] Stark and Crawford, "The Conservatism of Emoji", p. 5.
[404] Ibd.
[405] The transition from the emoticon "shruggie" to emoji's "shrug" is a good example for the transition towards specification and, in this case, especially vernacular gendering. According to Emojipedia "[t]he Unicode character

emoticons to the emoji repertoire do not just advance the variety of the expressive spectrum, allow for nuance and individualization, but also create exclusion. Indeed, the effectiveness of that exclusion, paradoxically or not, increases with the diversity offered, even if eradicating ambiguity and a maximum of personalization are, as will be debated in the second part of this chapter, among the defined goals.

Sure, the variety of emoji's smiley repertoire alone is staggering. Unicode offers a wide and incessantly growing range of smiles and smile-like expressions, and each comes with a slightly different nuance in meaning in terms of the gestural affect it transports. But simultaneously, there always remains room for ambiguity (or creative "mis"uses to attribute metaphorical qualities to a sign), even if the general idea is for emoji, especially the gestural, expressive and humanoid ones, to deliver *specific* affect and to clarify, enhance, personalize and stabilize meaning. While emoji perform what the (smiling, smirking, laughing, crying, loving, aching, wanting, hungry, sad or tired) body, in its absence, cannot, emoji's gestures and bodies are no longer the product of a new reading (as in emoticons) but, simply, a new product.

This is why emoji—still fulfilling and steadily expanding the function the old signs (dots, dashes, marks and brackets)—require us to read differently. While old signs, brackets, dots and even letters, in some way persist as emoji's "DNA"—in the universalized codes that summon them—the corporality of the linguistic signs, their text-bodies, become less important. Emoticons, to stick with the biological metaphor, do not discriminate between geno-type and pheno-type: they integrate themselves into the texted texture and display exactly what they are made of. Emoji, quite on the contrary, are programmed and skeuomorph: these smiles, taken literally—as for example

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Shrug ("Person Shrugging") does not specifiy a gender through is displayed as woman on most major platforms." Compare: "🤷 Shrug ¯_(ツ)_/¯ Emoji." 🤷 *Shrug ¯_(ツ)_/¯ Emoji*, www.emojipedia.org/shrug/.

"U+263A"[406]—would not give the body much to relate to, to recognize a certain "gestalt," or to map itself onto. With the signifiants' materialities, the ambiguous signs once again disguised—not by the conventions of literal semiosis, this time, but by encryption—the visible shapes created by developers, emoji's phenotypes, can no longer claim universality.

[406] "☺ Smiling Face." ☺ *White Smiling Face Emoji*, www.emojipedia.org/emoji/%E2%98%BA/.

Globality/Universality

> "Primitives" may have the most human of heads, the most beautiful and most spiritual, but they have no face and need none. The reason is simple. The face is not a universal. It is not even that of the white man; it is White Man himself, with his broad white cheeks and the black hole of his eyes.[407]
>
> (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus*)

As we have seen, emoticon's semiosis subverts literal semiosis by pointing to the bodily intensity of meaning already there in written language, existing through the material quality of the written sign(s), and *between* words. Emoticons allow the writer to inscribe their body into the text, to bend, rethink and arrange the signs at hand, to perforate the text with bodily gestures, expressions, or affects. The possibility for variation is limitless: faces or gestures of the emoticon repertoire can easily be altered and enhanced simply by adding or removing signs within the combination. Emoji, on the contrary, are "given." Their repertoire is fixed, their looks, their appearances are already designed and their universal codes pre-written. Emoji's gestures and faces themselves are given part of the textual repertoire, they are part of the "font" rather than its combination, making them subject to design, marginal variation, copyright. (Apple's shrug looks slightly different from Android's shrug, though, just like the letter "A" in Times New Roman in comparison to its equivalent in other standard fonts, is recognizable as variant of the same.) This integration of the face-as-letter changes the communicative constellation radically, as the sending and the receiving body are both effectively halted to use another body—a communal one, broken down into various expressions and gestures—to inscribe themselves into a message. No longer are the signs (used

[407] Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 176.

literally or visually, but free for all) the material, but pre-designed emoji, entire bodily, gestural statements have become part of the keyboard.

This change towards privatization, and standardization of the communicable body is where question of identification with the material at hand becomes important. As we have seen, bodies have always sought to inscribe their own corporeality into the text—not just to (re)present themselves, but also to relate to the body on the receiving end. In other words: text has always needed the body, the gesture, the expressive face, in yet another way—in the form of the responsive face, the face of the opposite. Any incident of illocution will ultimately be directed at such an opposite face, and no theory of communication, of exchange (via emoji or any other sign) can operate without considering the question of outreach, readability, other bodies, the addressee.
In the previous passage I argued for emoji's function as markers of the body in the text from a historical perspective and showed how they respond to a longing for bodily inscription into text that predates their existence, I will now investigate the specific corporeality of the emoji using present day examples. Again, I will draw from literature and emoji scholarship, but focus mainly on recent developments and emoji's unprecedented rise in popularity ever since its standardization through Unicode. Also, its co-dependent relationship with simultaneously grown social media platforms, such as Twitter, will be briefly investigated to get a better understanding of the bodily/gestural nature of recent incidences of body politics in form of emoji activism. Bringing together these parallel and co-constitutive developments will then allow me to pursue the question of emoji's globality and the limits of their universality, as emoji's universalism is, as I will show, determined by the exclusion it exerts on certain bodies, by the decisions which bodies to represent in which parts and how.

A Thousand Faces

In Deleuze's and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*,[408] an entire chapter is devoted to one particular part of the human body: the face. In their passage on "Year Zero. Faciality" the face, as an abstracted "*white wall/black hole* system,"[409] marks the nexus between significance (requiring the white wall) and subjectivation (in need of the black hole). According to Deleuze and Guattari, it is in the face-to-face setting, where meaning is established and determined, and "[t]he form of the signifier in language, even its units, would remain indeterminate if the potential listener did not use the face of the speaker to guide his or her choices."[410] Deleuze and Guattari here refer to the necessity of bodily, non- or para-linguistic information—"the face is a map"[411]—to attribute meaning to language: a theory already discussed at length in the first part of this chapter. However, their argument also points towards the limits of such semiotic processes, the problems they create. They write:

> Faces are not basically individual; they define zones of frequency or probability, delimit a field that neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unamendable to the appropriate significations. Similarly, the form of subjectivity, whether consciousness or passion, would remain absolutely empty if faces did not form loci of resonance that select the sensed or mental reality and make it conform in advance to a dominant reality.[412]

[408] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.
[409] Ibd., p. 167.
[410] Ibd.
[411] Ibd., p. 170.
[412] Ibd., p. 168.

Evidently, Deleuze and Guattari here speak of the abstract face—of faciality and face-centrism, of our face-structured society—rather than some individually miming, expressing and meaning face. But this is exactly where the thought becomes useful for theories on writing and facial representation, for the "interface": unindividual faces who are placed "inter," that is: *in between*, and that are used to communicate (between) bodies. For written communication, it is not only authorial intention, but also the "loc[us] of resonance", the responsive face—the assumed, anticipated, absent one—that structures and punctuates the writer's language, and helps intending sense with it.

Emoji, which are primarily used as communication enhancements between physically distant bodies, offer a way to compensate for the absence of the opposite face, and even help anticipating certain very concrete facial reactions and responses of the other. The fact that the anticipation of a face or a gesture in form of one or more emoji indeed ends up serving as their perfect replacement—no need to "roll on the floor with laughter", or break out in a "laughing face with tears of joy" when a punctuating emoji, thus establishing the illocutionary intent, takes care of that for you—also extrapolates the eminently intrusive character of their outreach. Emoji corporeality, that is corporeality of very specific kind, is not only expressed, but needs to be sent, it is conceived as an unwarranted intrusion, as imposition. In his search for an explanation to emoji's popularity, Evans writes:

> [T]he adoption rate of Emoji is staggering; and this provides grist to the mill that Emoji is a truly global form of communication. It matters not a jot whether your mother tongue is

> English, Finnish or Korean: the smiley face means the same thing in every language—we are all, or nearly all, 'speaking' Emoji now.[413]

While I do respect the wholehearted embrace of media and the hope that one day it will allow us to leave behind the nation state and, in that sense, promoting equality on an entirely new level, I anticipate certain blind spots and questions of exclusion and exclusive representation not fully getting addressed here. For one, Evans does not speak of nations, explicitly, but rather different languages. I have already voiced doubt that the smiley face indeed "means the same thing in every language." A simple look at the variety in meaning a "☺" can express in different contexts even when staying within the paradigm of one and the same language, makes me suspicious of such speculative theories of a message's meaning, especially when it claims "global," or even "universal" applicability. But let's accept, for a moment, the premise that a smiley could indeed be sent by any person of the named nationalities, and, thanks to its skeuomorphic shape, also be legible as smiling face by a receiver at the other side of the globe. Does that mean the smiley, the smiley face, the smiling emoji as message is indeed *universal*? And if so, what kind of global universalism is at hand here, that is potentially able to force itself onto any receiving device and any reader, anywhere on the globe, at any time?

Admittedly, the idea holds fascination. Freeing oneself from the limits of one's own, language-ridden body, from one's specific mother *tongue*, and advancing to a form of writing that, without using a single word, communicates *my* gesture, *my* body, what I *mean* exactly, and, moreover, in a way every other body could relate to and be exposed to—in other words: no other body is immune to—is, surely, what fuels the rise of emoji and its excessive usage. Such an idea of

[413] Evans, *EMOJI CODE*, p. 26.

overcoming one's own limitedness by deferring oneself to a common-body with limitless communicability is at least, how emoji is advertised by those who claim their global, universal outreach. The pragmatic reality, however, differs. Not only is the evolution of emoji, as we have seen, intricately linked to textual traditions that are historically specific and, as such, inscribed in emoji, but, and perhaps even more importantly, emoji are also very specific depictions of very specific bodies in very specific parts and stylizations.

A closer look into emoji's factory process, the production logics of this growing "universal" common-body we use to represent our own, will help to shed light on the origins for the processes of exclusion at work. We need to ask: who are the bodies behind the sending bodies and their representations? Who are the anticipated faces, whose faces have to *act*, be represented, before they can be anticipated and seen, adapted by a uni(versal) code? To ask the question of political and bodily representation in digital language by means of hands-on, real-life examples, I will give three brief synopses of parallel developments between the years 2013 and 2014. I will then bring them back together in order to revisit emoji's special "universality". The parallel montage shall will use the initially quoted article—Alex Clark's "Emoji: the first truly global language?"—on August 31, 2014 as a point of reference. The date and the specific timeline hold central relevance to the debate.

I)

On July 17, 2014 Eric Garner, a 43-year-old African American, was choked to death by a NYPD police officer. On August 9 of the very same year, Michael Brown, also African American, and on the day of the incident 18 years old, was shot dead by a Ferguson police officer. In August 2014,

these two deaths had been the two most recent in a long series of incidences of police violence against African Americans in the United States and the outrage over the killings helped spark a political movement to call attention to racist and institutionalized injustice against African American citizens. After Michael Brown's death, and starting in his hometown, Ferguson, Missouri, a series of protests erupted across the country, coining "Black Lives Matter" as unifying slogan and political message. Although the hashtag #blacklivesmatter is actually a couple of months older and was first used in 2013, after Trayvon Martin, another African American teenager had been shot, it was these two killings within less than one month and the subsequent street protests which popularized both slogan and hashtag.

On August 31, 2014, the day Clark's article on emoji's universalism, the political divisions of the newspapers were full of the latest updates on the most recent events in Ferguson. Continuing a weekend of protests, that Sunday, hundreds of people organized a march to the most representative parts of the city to demonstrate grief and outrage.[414]

II)

The Unicode consortium first made emoji internationally send- and receivable in 2009 and this first list of approved emoji were then available to software developers around the globe.[415] Ever since, the emoji dictionary, its list of accepted and available characters, has grown steadily. The process of adapting new symbols to the repertoire is long and competitive; for a new emoji to get

[414] Cf. for instance here: Zauzmer, Julie. "Ferguson Protesters March through H Street NE Corridor on Saturday Night (Posted 2014-08-31 20:53:22)." *The Washington Post*, Aug 31, 2014, URL: http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1558483623?accountid=10226
[415] Cf. Evans, *EMOJI CODE*, p. 19.

accepted, it has to fulfill an entire list of criteria and go through an elaborate vetting process.[416] According to their own website, the Unicode consortium are a non-profit organization who seeks to "enable[…] people around the world to use computers in any language."[417] In 2014, they were also, however, already a conglomerate of eleven majorly prosperous companies, nine of which happened to be American, ten of which were led by male CEOs, zero of whom were African-American.[418]

Between the years 2013 and 2014 there was a massive increase in emoji usage and popularity, and their incessant usage was newly documentable in real time, by software Matthew Rothenberg's *Emojitracker*[419] launched in the very the same year. The emoji art and design show was held in New York City in 2013; the word "emoji" became part of the English dictionary; *Emojipedia*,[420] an online dictionary for all emoji characters, with resources and information on history, meaning and usage was first launched. And in 2014, July 17 [!], the date always shown on the emoji "calendar" character—📆—was elected the official international "Emoji Day".[421]

On August 31, 2014, the day Clark's article on emoji's universalism, the palette of available, recognizably human emoji, in Apple's version,[422] looked like this:

[416] Cf. Evans' investigation of the "dumpling project", the lastly successful initiative to include a dumpling emoji to the list of food items. Evans, *EMOJI CODE*, pp. 27ff.
[417] "The Unicode Consortium." *Unicode Consortium*, URL: *www.unicode.org/consortium/consort.html*.
[418] All information taken from their official website at the time, as well as the referenced company pages, see: "The Unicode Consortium." *Unicode Consortium*, www.unicode.org/consortium/consort.html.
[419] "Emojitracker, realtime emoji use on twitter," URL: www.emojitracker.com/.
[420] 📙 *Emojipedia* – 😃 *Home of Emoji Meanings* 💁👌🎄😍, URL: www.emojipedia.org/.
[421] "Emoji Timeline." *Emoji Timeline*, emojitimeline.com/.
[422] Crawford and Stark explicate that while the emoji code base are standardized, the exact image is dependent on the specific font and, thus, subject to copyright. In terms of racial diversity and representation, there is no difference to other variations of the same code palette available in 2014. Cf. Stark and Crawford, "The Conservatism of Emoji", p. 5.

"Apple IOS 6.0." *Apple IOS 6.0 Emoji List.*[423]

III)

Between the years 2013 and 2014, there was an remarkable increase in new sign-ups on the social networking service Twitter.[424] Its user numbers soared by a third, reaching an unprecedented high of 63 million active users.[425] Though used internationally, US Americans make up the biggest group of Twitter users, with disproportionate popularity among young African Americans: according to a study from 2014, 40% of African-American social network users between the ages of 18 and 29 reported using the platform, while only 28% of their white peers reported doing the

[423] "Apple IOS 6.0." *"Apple IOS 6.0," Emoji List, URL: www.emojipedia.org/apple/ios-6.0/.*
[424] "Twitter. It's What's Happening." *Twitter*, URL: www.twitter.com/.
[425] "Number of monthly active Twitter users worldwide from 1st quarter 2010 to 1st quarter 2019," Statista, URL: www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/.

same.[426] An ever growing number of Twitter-internal initiatives were started at the time as well. Subsumed by social scientists under the term "Black Twitter,"—the name was subsequently adapted and used as a hashtag, many of these initiatives sought to promote "black" content, fight for equal representation, and to facilitate the distribution of news from a decidedly anti-racist perspective.[427]

Twitter's platforms, despite of their potential for delivering more diverse forms of journalism, of course, need to be understood as parts of a larger discourse machine that is inseparable from discursive machineries of traditional media. All newspapers tweet. Hence, it does not, structurally, differ in terms of its dependency on capital, the freedom it provides, its general credibility or the level of control it exerts over its users. However, it does differ regarding its formal parameters: the promotion of brevity, and the personalization of information sent and received. As a user of Twitter, I can choose whom to follow and, to a large degree, I control the information I receive or seek to find. It serves me as an archive and enables me to become my own curator of information. Evidently, any freedom to tweet and retweet, to read and participate is conceptually defined by the formal tools and restrictions, the terms and conditions that make up the framework. As participant, I cannot violate these terms, I have agreed to the options it provides, as I have to the restrictions it comes with, for instance, a character limit per post, or the fact that my tweet is retrievable even years after its sending date, and can, always, be traced back to a specific date and time.

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[426] Cf. Hillstrom, Laurie Collier. *Black Lives Matter: a Guide to an American Subculture*, ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/columbia/detail.action?docID=5496159, pp. 77ff.
[427] Cf. for instance ® Blacktwittɛr. "Blacktwittɛr ® (@BLACKTWlTTERHQ)." *Twitter*, Twitter, 24 Apr. 2019, twitter.com/BLACKTWlTTERHQ.

On August 31, 2014, the day Clark's article on emoji's universalism, @123madit wrote this tweet, using the hashtag #Ferguson, which a couple of years later, according to Twitter itself, had become "the most used social-issue hashtag in the 10-year history of the platform."[428]

(Tweet by @123madit)[429]

Emoji Activism & Body Politics

Let us recapitulate. There is a debate about emoji's universalism at a time when the only non-white emoji in the entire palette is a brown, male face wearing a turban. There is political struggle going on, simultaneously, on the streets and on social media platforms to fight institutionalized racism. There is a new social media platform available whose services allow information to be sent out to reach, inform and recruit millions, potentially, within seconds of time. The platform comes with a limitation of characters though, 140 per tweet at that time, by which the medium creates immediate demand for quick and effective communication of highly affective, personal and

[428] Anderson, Monica, and Paul Hitlin. "History of the Hashtag #BlackLivesMatter: Social Activism on Twitter." *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*, Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech, August 15, 2016, www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/.
[429] Madison (@123madit). August 31 2014, 7:19 PM. Tweet. Screenshot by author, URL: https://twitter.com/123madit/status/506129191541420032.

emotionally charged information. This is how Twitter, among others, created a demand for communication in—emoji. Understanding the developments on Twitter, on the streets, and on our keyboards not as parallel, but in fact co-constitutive and highly dependent on each other, is important.

Certainly, the idea that representation and representability in and through the media are political matters, is not new. Indeed, the direct, if complicated link between political protest and social media has been analyzed often and at length, perhaps most prominently when it comes to the events during the so-called Arab Spring. According to Reza Jamali, it is in the face of censorship and oppression of popular opinion, that social media becomes an "attractive vehicle through which the public may express ideas."[430] Without wanting to draw simplified comparisons between political movements in their historically highly specific contingencies, the wish for quick and unbiased—or quite on the contrary: openly blunt and opinionated—journalism on recent events, if possible "in real time," made and makes social media platforms such as Twitter a relevant tool in various societies in movement. In his analysis of *Media and Participation*, Nils Carpentier writes about the ambiguous role participative media can play in political struggle. He argues that

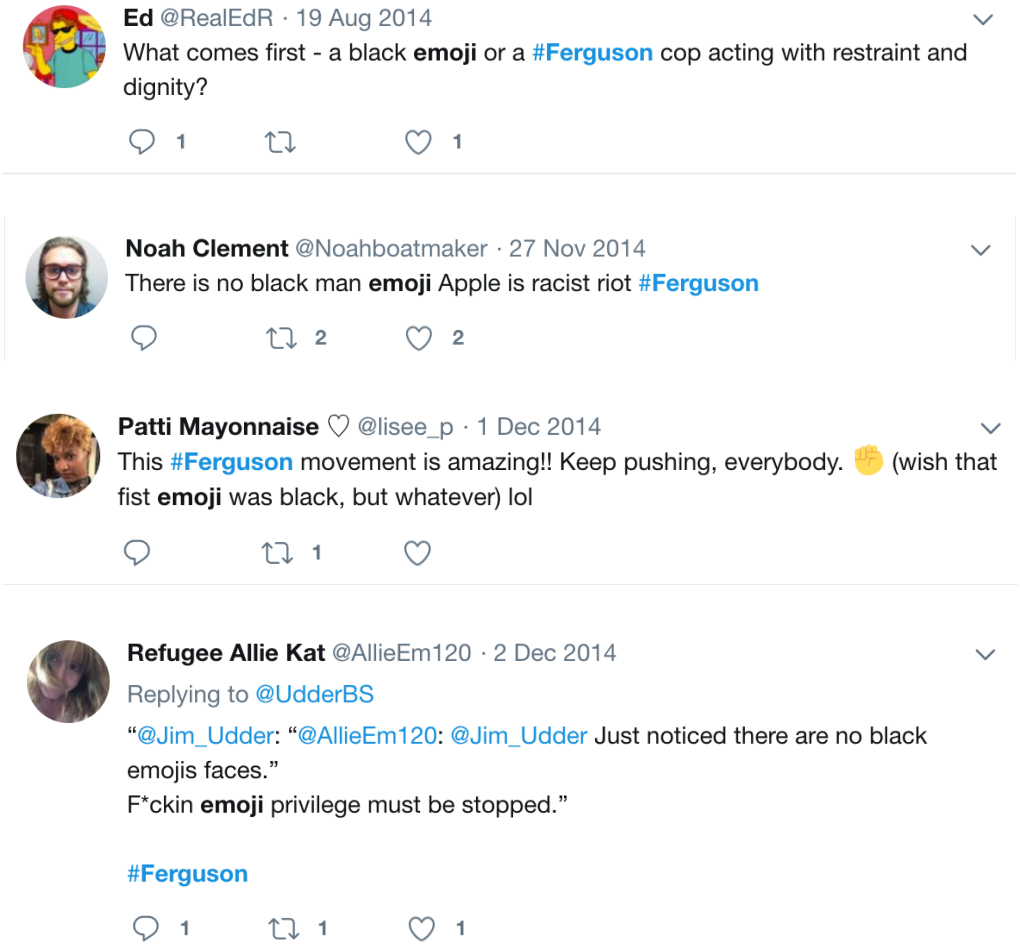
> "[...] societal decision-making processes have many inbuilt restrictions. At the material level, this includes the unbalanced control over a variety of objects [...]. Societal resources are not evenly distributed, and the control over the diverse discursive machineries is equally unbalanced, as instanced by the differences generated by media ownership. At the discursive level, restrictions can be generated by the privileged access of some voices (e.g., members of the political elites to mainstream news), which implies lack of access for others.[431]

[430] Jamali, Reza. *Online Arab Spring: Social Media and Fundamental Change*. Chandos, 2015, p. 2.
[431] Carpentier, Nico. *Media and Participation a Site of Ideological-Democratic Struggle*. Intellect, 2011, p. 147.

While these analyses were made with reference to political events on different parts of the globe, they certainly hold true for the developments around BLM and the role Twitter assumed: as catalyst of the collective chronicle written. However, other than the various movements throughout the Arab Spring, which—being in themselves very diverse and hardly subsumable under one term or narrative[432]—prioritized a struggle towards political equality, democratization and freedom of speech, the BLM movement is much more explicitly centered around the body—the black body in particular—and thus, in many regards, set at the nexus between body, identity, and representational politics.

In a way, *Black Lives Matter*—and the Black Twitter movement in particular—redefined, and continues to redefine, the making of body politics. And emoji—with their explicit corporeality, triggering identification more than any other textual media—helped to take the debate around apt, fair, equal representation to an entirely new level. The following selection of tweets, all from the time after August 9th 2014 and the months of protests that followed, exemplify the urgency of the debate, and how explicit the connection between emoji representation and political outrage needs to be understood.

[432] The diversity of the struggles subsumed under the term cannot be done justice here. Also, I do not want to deny the eminently bodily aspects of some of these protests, not to mention the bodily character of any political action based in physical presence. For further reference of the role of body politics in the Arab Spring, cf. Jallad, Zeina. "The Power Of The Body: Analyzing The Logic Of Law And Social Change In The Arab Spring." *Columbia Journal Of Race And Law*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2016.



(Tweets by @LenBrenton; @RealEdR; @Noahboatmaker; @lisee_p; @AllieEm120)[433]

But what exactly is it that these tweets illustrate? As we have seen, there is evidence of verbalized demands for what language is lacking—inscribing a smile, for instance—to be found decades earlier. But do these demands actually correlate? Are the absences detected of one and the same kind? I suspect that Nabokov's contemplation on supine brackets and his playful request—"I have often

[433] Encyclopedia Bretonica (@LenBrenton). August 14 2014. 3:18 AM. Tweet, URL: https://twitter.com/LenBreton/status/499726798104846336;Ed (@RealEdR). August 19 2014. 6:00 PM. Tweet, URL: https://twitter.com/RealEdR/status/501760566893883393; Clement, Noah (@Noahboatmaker). November 27 2014. 7:23 PM. Tweet, URL: https://twitter.com/Noahboatmaker/status/538035512880414720; Mayonnaise, Patti (@lisee_p). December 2 2014. 2:23 AM. Tweet, URL: https://twitter.com/lisee_p/status/539590627067850754; Kat, Refugee Allie (@AllieEm120). December 2 2014. Tweet. Account suspended, retweet by @Jim_Udder, URL: https://twitter.com/Jim_Udder/status/539959786465685506. All screenshots by the author.

thought there should be…"—cannot actually be compared to these openly political demands to end "emoji privilege" and to provide means of representation to which an *other*-body[434] could rely. Moreover, I argue that the different natures of these demands—speaking, of course, from entirely differently privileged positions—are based on two entirely different ideas of meaning-making and demands for identification and bodily inscription. The movement for political justice and racial equality is, I think, also a demand to show that it *matter*s which bodies tweet.

Texted Bodies and "Scales of Universality"

"The reason is simple. The face is not a universal."[435]

In light of these findings, Crawford and Stark's argument, that the emoji is, in its success, a reminder of how "informational capital continually seeks to instrumentalize, analyze, monetize, and standardize affect,"[436] needs to be extended; not only our affects become instrumentalized and subject to standardization, but our bodies do, too. I do not think anyone would seriously claim that a relatively homogenous group of neither democratically elected nor particularly qualified people, such as the policymakers of the Unicode consortium, is fit to equip us with "language" that is "universal," yet, "universality" still and rather stubbornly persists as the promoted goal.

[434] I highlight the term of the "other" and "othering" as coined by feminist scholarship. Cf. Griffin, Gabriele. "Dictionary of Gender Studies - Oxford Reference." *Dictionary of Gender Studies - Oxford Reference*, Oxford University Press, 4 Oct. 2017, www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191834837.001.0001/acref-9780191834837.
[435] Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 176.
[436] Stark and Crawford, "The Conservatism of Emoji", p. 8.

Admittedly, a lot has happened since 2014, and an emphasized policy of inviting participation in terms of emoji creation has allowed the emoji palette to grow and variegate considerably. Not only are there about five times as many humanoid emoji characters in general, but also have they diversified enormously in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation depicted (for instance in various family constellations). Popular demand, one of the primary criteria for a new emoji to pass the vetting process, has brought color to the palette, and it was due to explicit requests, tweets such as those quoted, and a number of petitions and articles, that the consortium had to react to. As of July 2016, even a specialized emoji—three raised fists in various shades of skin tones—was made *incorporated* in the movement's hashtag, and ever since, "blacklivesmatter" when used as hashtag on Twitter, reads "#blacklivesmatter✊🏾✊🏽✊🏿".[437] This incorporation of the symbol into the hashtag is, in itself, emblematic for the inner paradox of emoji activism. Demanding apt representation on the basis of exact identification may lead to an increase in the spectrum of shades offered, but it does not eliminate the structural problem at the root: that the status quo is white and male (or will, at least, always have been) and that everything else offered is the result of struggle and resistance and will henceforth exists as variation, secondary to representation itself.

In this regard, to claim that there are different degrees of universality and that, as Danesi argues, "some emoji are higher on a "universality scale" than others"[438] misses the point, as, in the case of emoji, legibility is contingent on identification and, visibly, not everyone is targeted to identify to an equal degree. While the attempt behind the creation of smileys may indeed have

[437] The change of the hashtag is the result of an initiative by "Blackbirds", a group of Twitter employees whose goal it is to "celebrate and encourage diverse perspectives." See also "Twitter Blackbirds (@Blackbirds)." *Twitter*, Twitter, 12 Apr. 2019, twitter.com/blackbirds?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw.
[438] Danesi, *The Semiotics of Emoji*, p. 13

been to make them, as Danesi further argues, "as culturally neutral as possible," [439]—which, according to him, the yellow color is representative for—countless examples, and many of the tweets I quoted, show, how this is simply not true. Quite on the contrary; the yellow standard was always identifiable as signification of a white status quo. Emoji's most recent development, thus, exemplify the inner dilemma of identity politics—a phenomenon deeply intertwined with postmodernist thought. As Stuart Hall puts it rather provocatively,

> [...] there is nothing that global postmodernism loves better than a certain kind of difference: a touch of ethnicity, a taste of the exotic, as we say in England "a bit of the other" (which in the United Kingdom has a sexual as well as an ethnic connotation).[440]

Indeed, the history of emoji as illustration of and intervention in current debates extrapolates how the simple quest for political equality gets complicated by the insistence on diversity, especially on a representational level. While diversity and equality are, of course, not mutually exclusive and really do not stand in any kind of opposition in a political sense, issues arise when it comes to representational logics and its semiotics. There is, in other words, a difference between—failing, resisting or wanting to—identify yourself, your smile, with a hypothetical supine bracket, and—failing, resisting or wanting to—identify with an omnipresent and concrete, colored and gendered, bodily emoji. In this regard, the text body's brackets, "(", and ")", conceived as symbolic threshold between inclusion and exclusion, reassume, in their new emanation as "😀," their old function:

[439] Ibd.
[440] Hall, Stuart. "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" *Social Justice*, Vol. 20, No. 1/2 (51-52), Rethinking Race, 1 Apr. 1993, pp. 104–114. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/29766735?refreqid=search-gateway:bb9f0e59714f6d640804652777d58db8, p. 105-106.

exclusion. Not (parts of) the text are excluded, however, but (parts of) the body, (some of) the bodies writing and reading.

Conclusion

At first glance, the gestures assembled in this dissertation have little in common. Their materialities—writing, film, speech, and code—differ in kind, and one could argue that these four types of gestures can hardly be subsumed under the same term. Certainly, the results of their analyses are not transferable: Schlingensief's gestures tell us little about Emilia's; emoji will not be too helpful for the study of Weimar film. This is, however, precisely the point. Gestures, I have shown, are particular and, in many ways, they defy classification or even structural comparison. This is why the analysis of gestures reveals, if anything, local truths. What makes a comparative study of gestures productive nevertheless, is that each of the single analyses shows essential characteristics of the medium from which the gesture emerged. Rather than studying gestures "as such," my analyses sought to bring forth their activity and function within a particular medium. Approaching the body through various incidents of gestural activity offers a way to investigate the media/body relationship and to understand bodies as preconditioned—without running the risk of essentializing them.

Emilia's gestures, for instance, and the way the gestures are described throughout Lessing's drama—as hers but simultaneously as not hers—give insight into the internal struggle of the acting body in the theatre of its time. Lessing's stage directions treat the acting body as a body that is instructed by

literature and placed on a proscenium stage, but, simultaneously, as a body who experiences herself in relation and opposition to these conditions. An analysis of the drama's play with instructed gestures on the one hand, and the main protagonist's occasional and highly significant moments of defiance and rebellion against these instructions, the gestures she *narrates*, on the other, reveal this same tension as the drama's dramatic core and essence. The matrix of the medium's treatment of the body becomes tangible through the drama's oscillation between instructed and narrated or experienced gestures.

It is a different case with film. Louise Brooks' gestures died with her even if, to this day, her image lives on and keeps on circulating in a whirl of relentless citation. In comparison to fictional character Emilia's, Louise's gestures were "private," they were hers—at least at first. Studying the changes within Brooks' gestural repertoire throughout her collaborations with G. W. Pabst and the most prolific phase of her career, illustrates the impact the medium's developments—including the transition to sound, the steady commercialization and internationalization, and the close relationship between film and the boulevard press—had on the acting body. With the increasing regulation of the body's representation—and particularly the female body's representation—the scope of these bodies' acting, including the space for idiosyncratic gestures, diminished. Contrary to Agamben's memorable dictum of film essentially "being" gesture, I argued that film is indeed not gestured but that rather a close focus on the filmed bodies' gestures provides insight into the (extended) apparatus' limits and demands. I showed that, with a perspective that prioritizes the actors' gestures, the history of film can be narrated differently: as the history of an inherently body-active medium whose technology is simultaneously fueled by and at odds with the gestures it seeks—or at least once sought—to grasp.

My particular focus on Schlingensief's linguistic gestures throughout the performance *Please Love Austria* reveals these gestures, too, as contributions to a meta-discourse on the medium—the medium, among many others, being language and political discourse. While many aspects of the multi-media performance could have been analyzed (and such analyses may have led to different results), a focus on the bodies' particular bodily gestures when speaking—as a chorus, in unison, or as an individual, alone—makes the performance legible as a comment on (the German) language and its hegemonic tendencies and powers. Schlingensief's casual delivery of speech under the pretense of a "gesture-less," largely inactive and unproductive body who did not do anything but reiterate phrases that had already existed, put on display—but simultaneously exploited—the logic the German language and political discourse adhere to. Linguistic gestures, I showed, can be revealed as the cited messages' hidden centers. Indeed, it is the gestures themselves, produced by a group of apparently "non-acting," "real" bodies, that point out how the language of political discourse works.

Finally, emoji, the gestures I concluded with, also led up to questions about their medium and materiality. In the face of the continued and ongoing loss of Black lives to structural racism and police violence, it is nothing short of cynical to assume that Unicode's more recent updates, their remodeled and new web site and the growing palette of emoji at our service changed anything substantial (or that that had even been part of the agenda at any point). And certainly, our new ability to illustrate our texts and tweets a little more "diversely," does not make any factual inequalities disappear. The activism that led up to these changes, however, is significant. And being able to read emoji as traces of continued and ongoing evolutions of change aids in understanding the relevance of representational body politics—even in its smallest gestures.

Furthermore, the analysis of emoji and emoji's genesis and its precursors—other forms of text-based gestures—helps us better understand any coded medium and its mechanisms of exclusion. It may also help us be more aware of mechanisms of exclusion to be expected with technology yet to come.

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Reading this brief recount of the results one might end up discovering a curious commonality after all: all of the gestures seem to be at odds with their conclusions—at odds, perhaps, with conclusions in general. But why is that? Is it because gestures function, as scholars have pointed out, "on all time frames—moment-to-moment, ontogenetic, and evolutionary,"[441] that they are "ephemeral"[442] — or frequently described as such—and because they are or can, at least according to some, "become event"[443]? Or is there more to it?

After Emilia's death, her father Odoardo, left on stage alone with prince Hettore whom he holds responsible for his daughter's death, refuses to conclude things: he refuses to reach a conclusion *within* the medium. Unable to bear the idea of killing himself—to him, the logical consequence to his daughter's death—and to produce "eine schale Tragödie,"[444] Odoardo is terrified and decidedly unwilling to end things within the very tragedy he nevertheless happens to

[441] Church, R. Breckinridge, et al.. *Why Gesture? How the Hands Function in Speaking, Thinking and Communicating*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017, p. 398, DOI: https://web-b-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/ZTAyNXhuYV9fMTUwMzk5MV9fQU41?sid=6b0bad7a-8722-42e1-b04c-d6985979e43e@pdc-v-sessmgr02&vid=0&format=EB&lpid=lp_i&rid=0.
[442] Cf. the description of Boris Charmatz' "1000 Gestures" as taking "the ephemeral [...] to the extreme" – "Boris Charmatz. 1000 Gestures." URL: https://www.borischarmatz.org/?10000-gestures.
[443] Butler, "When Gesture Becomes Event." (Lecture title)
[444] Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*, p. 371.

be part of, and that he, calling out the tragedy within one of its last scenes, intuitively senses to be caught up in. With his daughter, Emilia, dead, the dramatic—and eminently choreographic—essence of the drama is gone and immobilized, and all Odoardo, we, and the audience can ask ourselves is whether we should have paid more attention to her and everyone else's gestures—"indem," *while*– they were happening.

Perhaps gestures do exactly that: they help us to orient ourselves within a medium because they are able to point out where and why a medium reaches its limits. Gestures point to where and why a medium is unable to meet certain demands—of certain bodily realities, for instance, or of a deviant body's representation. Some gestures are regularly and consciously employed by a certain medium, some others seem to erupt from within it, unexpectedly and spontaneously, to resist the medium itself—though, as has been shown, even such gestural eruptions tend to bear the traits of the very materiality they emerged from. Perhaps, acquiring "gesture literacy" requires us to tolerate such ambiguities, to keep going back and forth, to constantly switch between perspectives, between foci, between contexts. Questioning, on the one hand, what the context does and how, and questioning what gestures, bodily activities within that very context, do, on the other—may provide our perspective with the necessary flexibility to grapple with complex constellations such as the ones assembled in this dissertation. The gesture is never "just gesture" but also the effect of certain contexts and conditions that enabled it, or even brought it into being. At the same time, gestures are more than just event *within* or the *excess of* a certain medium reaching its limits: they refer to, remind us of, depend and insist on the acting body even in its factual absence.

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